

THE FORTNIGHTLY

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PANAMA

By ROSITA FORBES

THE Central American Republics are drawing together, conscious of their diverse weaknesses. But politics and trade depression have caused a spiritual decay. The sight of burning coffee, of cocoa diseased and bananas suffering from blue plague, of cattle still on the hoof unsaleable, and the futility of the specious remedies continuously suggested have proved as depressing as the original fall on Wall Street. Every Central American is—like his co-religionists further South—a gambler. Superimposed are first his politics, then his patriotism. Only an emotion could satisfactorily unite the people of the various small, striving republics. The great Simon Bolivar provided this necessary impetus, with his wars of liberation. It did not last, for every republic discovered a separate purpose.

Nicaragua, her amazing deserts festooned with volcanoes, is primarily interested in her metals, for which Germany was a good customer. Guatemala is in the fortunate position of being able to sell the fruit which is her main production direct to an American collecting and shipping company. Costa Rica has lost her Italian coffee market, but still makes a certain amount of money with bananas and rubber. Panama is largely dependent for a living on business connected with the Canal.

These countries have not suffered so severely as their neighbours in South America from the closing of European markets by our blockade. For the Caribbean as a whole sold nearly half its production to the U.S.A. Panama, Honduras, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and El Salvador were all in the same category, disposing of from 61 per cent. to 86 per cent. of their minerals, nitrates, oil fuels, hides, skins, wool, cocoa, fruit, molasses, sugar and flax seed to their great neighbour. The economics of these republics—and consequently their politics—are therefore directly linked with those of the U.S.A.

Columbia, Costa Rica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic are not so closely attached to Washington, for less than half

consists of bankers, industrialists, engineers, shop-keepers, commercial agents, shipping and railway men. Its officers are the German Consuls. Its Headquarters are the Legations. And its advance operations extend to the banks of the Panama Canal."

In this vital zone, everything is done for military reasons. The settlements are in effect a series of camps and garrisons. A third of the total population are soldiers. The Canal Administration maintain roads, houses, transport, hospitals, schools and clubs as much for the benefit of the troops as for its own special staff. Panama is America's link between two oceans, but also between two conflicting states of mind. The question which I heard echoing across the "Spanish Main" to the defenceless islands, whose sugar and fruit and oil feed and fuel a democratic continent, is "*Can we fight?*" not "*Shall we fight?*" But none of the Republics had decided whether America should be satisfied with a moderate part within a 300 mile limit, or whether—at this decidedly Anglo-Saxon moment—she should play lead on a world stage.

In two days the whole American fleet can pass through the forty-eight and a half miles of canals, lakes and locks united by the River Chagres and Rio Grande. This easy mechanical progress across what was within memory of our own generation an isthmus closely covered with hills, saves a thirteen thousand mile journey round Cape Horn. In eight hours the largest battleship of the U.S.A. can pass from Pacific to Atlantic. So long as the Canal exists, one American fleet can play a part in two oceans.

The Caribbean is—geographically—an American sea and it is possible that eventually Cristobal Colon's gift to totalitarian Spain may pass into the treasury of a people whose ideas—except in the importance accorded to gold—are in direct opposition to the most undemocratic Christopher's. But at present the Canal Zone is vitally important to us. So is the Republic of Panama which has just declared its intention of supporting President Roosevelt's "all-America" policy, but which in the recent "framed" election, resorted to Nazi forms of terrorism backed by an effective, local Gestapo, in order to return by a *hundred and one* per cent. of the total voters a party which probably does not represent more than a quarter of the electorate. Dr. Alfaro, the candidate of the "People's Front" was accused of revolutionary principles. A large consignment of arms intended for his supporters was seized in Costa Rica. The Axis Powers do not always work together in Central

America. On this occasion the Third International seems to have been supplying the People's Front with money and weapons, while the Fascist organizations supported Arnulfo Arias, the present President. So the new Panama régime described by Dr. Alfaro as "a farce by which a brutal Nazified Dictatorship attempts to disguise itself as democratic government" may have difficulty in maintaining its unequivocal support of President Roosevelt's policy for the protection of the Americas.

The Republic in question should be the Canal's second line of defence. One patriot-cum-revolutionary, sincerely believing that Germany will eventually be of more use to his country than Britain or the U.S.A., could do sufficient damage to a lock to interrupt the traffic essential for our supplies. Every year an average of 1,780 American merchant ships and 1,281 British have passed through the Canal; eastward bound with lumber, oil, ore, sugar, nitrates and grain. In emergency, all these cargoes could go by rail across the Panama Isthmus while night transit would double the speed of battleships passing from one ocean to another. But the smooth operation of these complicated processes depends not only on peace, but on the total absence of sabotage in the neighbouring zones.

The jungle presses close to the Canal and its accompanying railway. It is the cloak of invisibility spread over scores of big guns and their concrete emplacements. And this invisibility is stretched to cover the movements of 25,000 men and the watching planes ready to hold the sky.

At the key points, there are forts deep buried in the earth. Naval vessels guard the waters at each end, with a submarine depot and hydroplane station at Cristobal. Bombers and fighters are in reserve at the nearest aerodromes.

The Canal is supposed by experts to be impregnable from the sea. It is said that big coastal guns could prevent enemy ships standing in to shore. On the Atlantic side, America has a base at Guantamano in Cuba and the narrow passages between the Virgin Isles would be easy to defend. Air attack from the Pacific might be more effective if enemy aircraft carriers protected by such means as Japan's new 45,000 ton battleships could remain out of range at sea. But it would be difficult to ensure direct hits on the Canal machinery. Most of it is underground. At Miraflores, third of the great locks, I saw complete duplication of mechanical control, embedded in concrete under the earth. If enemy planes succeeded in evading the mighty guard which would rise like hornets from

civilian Albrook, the naval air base at Coco Solo and from military France Field, they might be able to bomb the spillway gates in Gatun Dam. But repairs could be quickly effected with coffer dams already available. So Gatun Lake would not necessarily run dry, nor ships be stranded in the locks. These are operated by power supplied by hydro-electric plants at Gatun and Madden, but there is an alternative steam system, and diesel engines are prepared for emergencies. As a last resort, the locks can be worked, temporarily, by hand.

America is fully alive to the necessity for special protection of the Canal which gives her such a fantastic weapon of defence or offence in case of war. Submarine nets have recently been placed at the entrances and experiments effected with smoke-screens. But it is on sabotage that Hitler and his *Ausland Deutsch* or local Nazi satellites rely for destruction and delay in all the Americas. The moves carefully planned in Berlin and brilliantly carried out by trade and diplomatic forces, by purposeful agitators and economists offering something which appears hearteningly *new* and *original* instead of the old, stale ways ending in destruction of crops and waste of raw material, can only be countered by productive action on the part of the U.S.A. and Britain. We also need "an army of talkers", such as Germany employs and that army must be recruited from workers of every kind, capable of appealing to their fellows in Latin America. They must be young, vigorous and expert in Spanish.

It is to the purse, the imagination and the stomach that Germany appeals. In collaboration with the United States, the British Empire ought to be able to provide the credits and the markets, *as well as the personal contacts* which would defeat Germany in the vitally important republics protecting or endangering the Panama Canal.

Caribbean history has been written by the aggressors. The advantage—when Britain, France and Holland flung themselves against the fortifications of Spain—was nearly always with the attack. Defence was at a disadvantage. The vitality of Europe in the Western Atlantic ebbed with the tides of discovery and occupation, while the first indications of an American age were consistent with swift, effective conquest in Cuba and Haiti.

Washington's new naval bases stretching from Bermuda to Guiana on the north-east coast of South America will protect the stormiest seas in the world. For four hundred years, the hurricanes have been imperial and religious, national, racial

and psychological as well as climatic. If the United States accept the full heritage of Columbus and of the men who followed him—de Soto the Spaniard, Morgan, Raleigh and stout old Benbow, the amazing Dutchmen de Graff and Van Horn, and France's great Viceroy Bertrand d'Ogeron—they must be prepared for more than defence.

The great issues of empire, black as well as white, were decided in the front line, under fire. If this century is to see the end of imperial ambitions, if 'federation' is to take the place of sovereignty and the map of the world be redrawn according to economic instead of national aspirations, the dominating democracies cannot be content with the parts of Spanish Governors beleaguered in Cuba or at bay in Cartagena. Peace is no golden apple to fall from a tree in Eden. It must be won on the world's seas and in its skies.

The work of Genesis is all to be re-done. We are at the sixth day of destruction. It is inevitable that the new world of Columbus which first defeated Napoleon,* must play its part in reconstruction. If democracy as a whole will not make the sacrifices familiar to dictatorships, Christopher's world and Abraham Lincoln's can play no enviable part in history.

The American age has yet to begin. It was predicted when Columbus imagined "a narrow cut joining the oceans of East and West" and again when Francis Drake astride the branch of a tree in Panama realized that one Great Power could hold—from "the waist of the World"—Pacific and Atlantic.

Ferdinand de Lesseps offered Christopher's Lord High Admiralty to the United States when he began the Panama Canal. Winston Churchill repeated the offer and Franklin Roosevelt accepted it when new Western Atlantic naval bases were leased to America. So the Jew Colon's viceroyalty of "seas, islands, oceans and a mainland", whose prodigious natural wealth is as important to the socialism of the future as to the tyrannies of ancient Spain or modern Germany, goes to the people whom the greatest genius and the greatest failure of the West visualized as "dying only when they are weary of living".†

*Dessalines, negro leader of Haiti, defeated Napoleon's General Leclerc.

†Bishop Las Casas' transcript of Cristobal Colon's Lost Journal.

AMERICAN DEFENCE AND THE PRESIDENCY

BY ALISTAIR COOKE

AS long ago as April, almost any day after the invasion of the Low Countries, everybody admitted that national defence would be an issue in the forthcoming campaign. But from the timid attention given to the foreign policy plank in the Republican platform, it was clear that the Republican party thought of defence in just those terms,—as a new national topic, a politician's headache, something the Committee on Resolutions must be sure to put on the agenda and do something about. Nowhere in the Republican party, except in the opinions of Wendell Willkie, who was hardly consulted when the platform was being written, was there any recognition that national defence was already a national emergency. Of course the President said it was, but the Republicans claimed he was anxious to say so in order to buy himself out of the New Deal fiscal muddle with another 'emergency' appropriation.

The subsequent history of Europe has shown that the President was right, whatever his motives may have been when he went on the air to say that aeroplanes cost a lot of money but the United States was going to have them. He has been consistently ahead of the people (and a generation ahead of the opposition) on foreign affairs and with each new crisis he has never doubted his ability to persuade the people to go along with him. This time the opposition decided the people would lag behind and look rather to any friend who could assure them convincingly enough that their sons' blood would never be spilled in Europe and need not be endangered anywhere as long as they held their necks firmly and vertically in the sand.

The Republican platform was drawn up in June on a guess taken in March. The guess was that the Midwest, the Great Plains, and a turbulent population in the Northwest and in the maritime workers of the West Coast, were more fervently isolationist than political writers had guessed or the Administration cared to admit. The events of late June and September have turned this guess into a catastrophic miscalculation, but

to see why the Republicans are now losing all along the line you have to go back to the extraordinary incidents that prompted this fond belief.

Most of the Republican pre-convention campaigning was done through the winter and the early spring, and of the likely candidates Thomas Dewey had shown himself to have the best flair for campaigning. At some unrecorded halt on his Midwest itinerary, when his denunciations of the Administration's farm programme and pro-labour policies had not been getting much response, he showed a furtive hand on outright isolation and was warmly applauded. He decided to play isolationism for all he was worth. He went beyond the party slogan, which promised Millions for Defence but Not a Boy for Europe,—traditionally a cry that might expect a rousing echo through all the farming states. Dewey might have hesitated a moment to consult the Gallup polls, which were revealing that many of the most hallowed axioms about regional beliefs and prejudices were to-day threadbare myths. He did not hesitate, however. He acted on his hunch and, reaching his peroration some place in Nebraska, he thundered that not a single package of American manufacture should leave the United States while the war was on. He promised that not a gun or an aeroplane would aid any belligerent if he were the next man in the White House. Through the Mountain States, and the wheat belt, and so West Mr. Dewey pounded every isolationist note on the traditional Midwest keyboard. And in most places, there was a harmonious roar of response.

On this experience, the Republicans clung to regular isolationism, thereby doing a terrible disservice to Wendell Willkie, who though he would have none of it could not obliterate on his recent campaign tour the memories that other Republican candidates had left through the West and Midwest in the spring. For his personal misfortune has been that though he could win the nomination without the party, he cannot expect to win the election without its solid alignment.

Mr. Dewey's guess was taken, then, when the European war was slumbering away as a 'phoney' war and the Maginot Line seemed to be the charmed rampart that stood between Hitler and any hopes he might have of realizing the Wellsian vision of modern war. If Mr. Dewey had gone back to Kansas even on April 10, he would have been disturbed. For the Scandinavian invasion moved the Mountain States, and their Swedish populations, as no other incident of the war. The prospect of a defeated France, which was clearly envisaged here at a time

no correspondent could say so in dispatches to Europe, stirred the whole Midwest as no European calamity this century has moved them. By the second week in June, the Great Plains correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun* wrote,

Mr. Dewey's iron-bound isolationism is now something for him to weep over, for the interventionist sentiment is coming along at an astounding rate the result has been that Mr. Dewey, Mr. Taft and Mr. Vandenberg are on the wrong side of a public issue, while Mr. Willkie, in agreeing with the Administration's foreign policy, has no popular issue to fight on.

But there was an issue,—for Mr. Willkie, not for anybody else. There were indeed two issues: the efficiency of the new defence programme, and the perilous stalling of American productivity in Mr. Roosevelt's interminable dogfight with business. If he could prove that American security was being frittered away in political jealousies, poor organization, and Presidential truculence, if he could show that the best industrial, military, and aviation brains in the country were not being consulted, he might over a tranquil summer make the electorate doubt that Roosevelt was the best man for the urgent task of industrial co-ordination. This would have been a tremendous charge but if it could have been remorselessly documented, it would have been Mr. Willkie's best claim to victory. Early in the summer there was plenty to go on.

The defence need became a defence crisis in May, with the testimony of General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff, before the House Military Affairs Committee. Americans were suddenly shocked to learn that the United States army was as low as nineteenth of the world's standing armies, that its infinite straggling coastline could be protected by about 900 anti-aircraft guns, that the army had about a thousand tanks, a few hundred modern combat planes, hardly one mechanized division, and that there was altogether enough equipment for a fighting force of 75,000 men. Americans knew in sorrow and frustration for the first time that the U.S. had been caught napping as smartly as everybody else. Appeals for help from British and French spokesmen were salt in the wound and no keener twinge has been felt here since the war began than that which greeted Premier Reynaud's helpless appeal to the 'might' of the United States. The might of America at that moment was in automobiles and hot dogs, in milk and vegetables, in water power and ice cream and gold. It was not anywhere in weapons of war, which was all that could save France, or perhaps all that could not save France.

General Marshall added further twitches to the general embarrassment by such concrete statements as that there were about enough anti-aircraft guns to defend New York City, and that if an enemy fleet appeared off Chesapeake Bay tomorrow, there would be no hope of defending the Eastern shore of Maryland, which is that finger that crooks into the Atlantic between Baltimore and Southern Virginia.

Mr. Roosevelt began badly by declaring the need of 5,000 planes a year and announcing an appropriation of about one-fifth of the money that aeroplane manufacturers said would be needed. He asked the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Morgenthau, to look after aeroplane procurement, and Mr. Harry Hopkins, the Secretary of Commerce, to take care of industrial mobilization. The press and public roared its indignation at this first move to improvise a defence programme out of whatever talent the Administration happened to offer. Quick to make his peace with newspapermen, the President scrapped his first plan and announced a full-time Defence Commission similar to Wilson's creation of 1917.

If Mr. Willkie had been the Republican nominee the first week in June he could have made sweet hay while the President was beaming on the amateur 'co-ordinating' of two pet Cabinet Ministers. Yet, even as late as July and August, there was plenty for Mr. Willkie to fight about, if he had had the courage to risk making politics of a national emergency. It was no secret that William Knudsen, chairman of the Commission, had stated firmly that plant expansion was impossible unless President Roosevelt would allow much more generous amortization allowances to manufacturers who were being offered the contracts. In early September there was a rumour, with visible fire behind it, that Knudsen had been on the verge of resigning over the President's stubborn refusal to allow fairly for depreciation of plants, and for his general unwillingness to delegate urgent authority to anybody outside the New Deal. The Army figures on strategic reserves were deplorably confused but there was no doubt that it had allowed itself a dangerously low reserve of rubber, tin, manganese, and tungsten, for all of which the U.S. is dependent on the Dutch East Indies, on Bolivia, and Malaya. There was meat for valuable nagging in the fact that the U.S. has still only one tin smelting plant in all its vast landscape and has therefore still to get its tin smelted by Britain. There was an old but operative scandal to be probed in the knowledge that an American-German firm, Mellon and I.G. Farbenindustrie, has

a monopoly on aluminium. There was an inviting onslaught in the Administration's plans for the civilian pilot training scheme, which threatened to offer the false security of an army of civilian pilots whose combat training would begin only when they were called for active service. By the end of August, the army had ordered only ninety-nine new planes and the Navy two hundred and fifty.

Mr. Willkie has not uttered a syllable of all this. He has generalized sincerely and passionately about the incompetence of this Administration to co-operate with all the industries it has antagonized. It may be that during October he will produce exhaustive criticisms of the defence programme which will be too serious to refute. The chances are now very slim. For to make a solid and crushing attack on the Defence organism, Mr. Willkie would need to have access to the files of the Army, and the Navy and the Defence Commission. Of course, he does not have them for the galling but inevitable reason that they are locked in the secret bosom of President Roosevelt and his advisers.

The other issue which I have said might have stirred the people in a tranquil summer is one that Mr. Willkie has stated several times with fine clarity; it is the insistence on increased production, on the economic fact that as long as the United States is the world's biggest producer, and can continue to step up its production, it can 'outdistance Hitler in any contest he chooses in 1940 or after'. Alas for Mr. Willkie's luck and his hopes. It was not a tranquil summer. Total war was learning new ardour just as he finished his cross-country tour and was ready to energize his campaign in its last stage. The timing of Nazi coups had played like a sequence of miracles into Mr. Roosevelt's hands. And the latest, and to the United States the most alarming, detonated at the end of September and made even this telling Willkie plea sound like an interesting economic theory.

Until September 25, the London bombings and the lively retaliations of the R.A.F. had been the continental headline news. On the morning of the 25th, the *New York Times* published an astonishing dispatch from its Tokyo correspondent baring a diplomatic 'squeeze play' in the Far East almost as incredible as Leland Stowe's dispatch from Oslo on April 9 about the triumph of the Fifth Column. Mr. Abend's dispatch was wholly uncensored and evidently represented a news item which Tokyo regarded as ripe enough to let fall into Uncle Sam's lap. The next day the story broke, of the

Japanese-Axis pact. A fifty-year-old *status quo* in the Pacific was summarily revised, without American permission, by the mere scratch of Hitler's pen. Within forty-eight hours, the President had announced a new loan to China of 20 million dollars, declared an embargo on all scrap metal to Japan, henceforth limiting the American export to Great Britain; Japan had signed a full military, economic, and political alliance with the Axis; Italy had warned the U.S. that she would be attacked in both oceans if it interfered either way; the Senate promptly ratified the Treaty of Havana that it had been studiously debating; Lord Lothian was at the White House with Sir Walter Layton, asking for 'speed, speed, speed'; and the State Department was keeping the night lights burning engrossed in plans to step up material aid to Britain. The European war, which Mr. Dewey had promised Midwesterners in the spring we were at all cost going to stay out of, had unceremoniously moved over into the Western hemisphere.

Although President Roosevelt is a master at snatching crises from a hat when his political security needs an extra boost, history had once again delighted to snatch them ahead of him. This was a genuine American crisis, as serious as any since the Fall of France and the first direct Axis challenge to the U.S. since the war began. The Republican charge that the President has never relinquished powers he had legitimately assumed in an emergency seven years ago were now being made at a time when any President would have had to assume them. The Japanese-Axis pact confirmed the West coast in its traditional anxiety over Japanese intentions and probably assured Mr. Roosevelt the Western vote. It made the defence programme seem now even more pressing than it had seemed after the first air assault on London. Defence at any cost, impatience to see first draftees already in training, to have labour settle at once the terms of its co-operation with the national effort,—these were the fervent desires of Americans at the end of September. The campaign, which since Mr. Roosevelt had cleverly renounced any intention to make one, meant the campaign of Wendell Willkie, slithered anticlimactically on to the shelf of national memoranda, at the very moment when Mr. Willkie's trans-continental train was pulling into New York for a speech on the third term, which the Republicans had resolved to make 'the issue' and which popular sentiment now cared less about than the cut of George Washington's trousers. Mr. Willkie's two weeks of active campaigning had taught him confidence and boldness.

Wisconsin went Republican at the primaries and the Willkie managers delightedly noted that Willkie sentiment was now swinging away from the shuddering depths it had dropped to in August (when the Gallup poll gave Willkie only ten states to the President's thirty-eight). But Mr. Roosevelt's internecine quarrels with the Defence Commission did not seem to matter any longer, nor the advisability of the civilian pilot scheme, nor the chronic problem of the national debt. There seemed to be little time left to choose varieties of wisdom. A flood warning had suddenly been posted and it was no time to halt the horse, old as he was, in order to discuss the technicalities of stream-crossing. Moreover, if there were allies to woo and bind, they were undoubtedly the Americans below the Rio Grande, and if there was one name and one administration able to make it, the name was Roosevelt and the administration was that of Secretary Hull. For in foul and fair Yankee weather, the S. Americans chronically remember that United States 'discipline' has been enforced most intolerably under Republican régimes. And the South Americans, who do not read U.S. newspapers, rightly or wrongly think of Mr. Willkie as a Republican.

This article reads admittedly like an epitaph on the brave, unlucky, and mishandled career of Wendell Willkie. It may not be as bad as that. The popular vote was almost evenly divided, even before Willkie started his campaign tour. But since it is the state representation in the Electoral College that counts, it seemed doubtful, in the last week of September, if even the invigorated Willkie campaign could win for him on November 4 any more than eight or nine States. Yet when the voting is over, there will very likely remain more than half the electorate who would like to see Mr. Willkie President, some other time.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY

By JOHN ARMITAGE

THE East End of London has become news at last. To the parson, who has battled away his best years in a contest of unequal strength with poverty on the one hand and apathy on the other; to the doctor who, faced with appalling living conditions and the dirt which spreads disease has yet considered the struggle worth while; to the club leader and the hundred and one organizations and missions which have tried to make life possible, it must seem an irony of painful violence that it has needed not only a war but the actual destruction of thousands of mean little dwellings to fasten the attention of the public on the question of how the poor live. Poverty is not news; war is.

Throughout the years between the wars it has needed the whole armour of God, and particularly the shield of faith, to keep the parsons going; it has needed a rare devotion to duty on the part of the doctors—those of them who have won through and kept their vision clear—and it has needed a combination of faith and an intensity of political belief which amounts to faith to keep the hundred and one organizations marking time with a problem which was never solved and never likely to be solved. For the East End is the symbol, not the whole disease. There are parts as poor, as pitiful and as bug ridden in Paddington; there is stark poverty in South-East London, around the Elephant and Battersea; there is the iniquitous Scotland Road area of Liverpool, a swamp of human dross; there is, or was, the derelict area of Durham where grand people, like others in South Wales, were left to languish and to moulder.

Since belief in God is at a low ebb the idealists have turned to political theory for solutions. I am convinced that they are wrong. The problem which lies before us still is essentially a spiritual problem. We shall never solve it by rules and regulations, by Fascist, Communist or any other states. We shall solve it when enough of us really care about our neighbour; when enough of us have not got the stomach to walk

through the East End of London or the Scotland Road area of Liverpool and come out not wishing to do anything about it. When poverty is mentioned it is usual to plead ignorance. Or to hide behind some Act of Parliament which might put things right if the powers it gave could be put into operation. We may vote Conservative, Liberal or Labour but the fact remains that the vast majority of us have been content not to know how the other man lives. We vote—it must be faced—to better our own lot.

A spiritual blanket lies over these poor districts. They see life as a hand to hand, day to day struggle. They believe that it must be pleasant to be rich but the prospect of such a state is too remote seriously to be considered. Excepting those who imbibe strong doses of a political mixture they are not given to wishful thinking. They are sheep. Some of them even go to church. I, myself, have told a dozen old ladies and one man in an East End mission that Jesus cared, and they nodded their heads in agreement. It was the comforting message they wished to hear; with exceptions they saw little evidence of it among His followers. In that very street in which I was speaking four families were living in nearly every house, a family in each room. Twelve to sixteen people in a four-roomed house was average not abnormal. But ridding ourselves of overcrowding or some such evil, though useful, is only a small milestone in reform. What is needed is a plan.

For the past twenty years industry has led reform. Its influence has been benevolent and beneficial. Many large firms have cared for their employees in a thoroughly admirable way. They have looked after their health, their recreation and to a smaller extent their future. I can give an instance, now, of one big firm, a munition factory in a heavily built up area which has done more for its many workmen rendered homeless in the air-raids than any government scheme. They have housed these workmen, their wives and families in their deep shelter, they have aided the families to get away to safety and they are housing the wage-earner left behind in a large house, specially taken over for the purpose and run on hostel lines.

But good though industrial reform has been, it has in the long run been little better than enlightened self-interest. How else can we explain the fact that of all people the mother, upon whose energy and devotion the happiness and well being of the wage earner and his children depend, comes under no scheme of health insurance and as a result passes in a few years from a smart young girl into a tired, quarrelsome, unkempt, old

young woman? How else can we explain the plight of the old age pensioner, whom medical science prevents from dying but whose existence is one long battle of making-do? It is not more money that I plead for, although goodness knows it is the economic as much as the health factor which conspires to make so many homes a scene of strife. Divorce is a luxury the poor can rarely afford unless the need is desperate. There would be no need for it to be desperate if economic and health conditions were not so hard.

I have not been out of London since the serious bombing of this country began. I do not know how badly other industrial areas have been hit. But I have seen in London enough to overwhelm one with sorrow and at other times to make one glad. I would willingly see all the houses of the East End demolished if it meant that we were able and ready to build again on an enlightened plan. I know the people hate to see their homes destroyed. They have learnt, in a bitter school, that it is better to hang on to what you have, rather than to seek fortunes which may and generally do prove nebulous elsewhere. Fear of the unknown has been a predominant feature of the last few years. Most of us play for safety, which for one quarter of our population means financial safety and for the other three quarters, the safety of familiar streets and alley ways, known as home.

There has been some evidence recently of indiscriminate bombing by the German Air Force but the worst damage in the East End and other industrial areas of London, up till the end of the second week in October, was without question caused by bombs which just missed their objectives and landed on the small dwellings on either side. Those who know London will not need to be reminded that the railways are backed by our smallest and poorest homes. It is the same in the docks. The East Ender has great courage and he even has the courage to recognize this fact. He agrees that most bombs have been aimed, even if the aim proved weak. Said one badly injured man to a parson friend of mine: "It all comes of living near this bridge". What angers one is the indignation the bombing of small dwellings arouses in the breasts of those who have never paused to consider the conditions of these homes, or the situation of these homes, in times of peace. If they have anything at all to offer to the world, they must consider these conditions now.

Many people, through the sad school of personal experience of evacuation, are beginning to realize that quite a large per-

centage of the population is unclean. They are disgusted at the discovery. How deep is the pit of ignorance can be judged by the conduct of officials at one rest centre. This rest centre received 250 people, all homeless and some of them from a very poor district. Blankets were issued each night, collected in the morning, and re-issued. Officials, kindly, well-meaning officials, were surprised at the end of a fortnight to discover that they had considerably more lousy specimens among their flock than at the beginning. It has been the same story since the start of the evacuation. Horrified ladies tell one, more or less secretly, that their evacuees wet the beds and their heads crawl. They didn't know, they say, that such conditions were possible in England. We have no right to be so ignorant; we have no right to let our brothers live like pigs. The pig, I am told, is a naturally clean animal, but you can't do much with an East End sty.

A great deal has been said about the failure of the Government to find adequate shelter for victims of air raids and particularly for the 'homeless' who are willing to be taken right out of London. It was just another example of the inability of the well-to-do to grasp the immensity of the problem; the failure to realize that when a bomb fell on the East End, many men and women lost not only their homes but all their material wealth, represented by their few possessions. As a result the majority were quite unable to help themselves. They became entirely dependent on the Government scheme and charity, and during these first two or three weeks it was charity that came to the rescue. I do not think that those who saw the many homeless sitting on hard chairs in mission halls and rest centres will easily forget the sight. The meaning of the word 'forlorn' took on a new depth. The picture was much more poignant than the thousands of eyeless windows and the hundreds of rubble houses. It was humanity on the brink of despair and only the administrations of voluntary workers prevented collapse.

It is no easy task to feed hundreds when you have not got enough food and communications have broken down. It is still more difficult when there is no gas. It is not simple to clothe all those who have lost all their possessions or to find them room to sit or lie down. But somehow this was done and the respite gave the authorities the necessary time to re-organize. (Of course many officials worked desperately and unselfishly hard throughout; it was not their fault, as we say, but nevertheless it was the fault of ignorance). Perhaps I may

sketch in one picture of a voluntary organization, a church in the East End entirely filled with clothes put out in orderly array on pews and on the backs of pews. Services were held in the church hall to avoid interference with the efficiency of the arrangements—a strange contrast to the experience of the homeless woman, seeking aid from one official to another, and finally being told to return at 9 a.m. I do not press the point. It was after all Sir John Anderson who stirred the A.R.P. services into life and what we should have done without them the East End knows. All the same one is glad to see Mr. Morrison and Miss Ellen Wilkinson in their present jobs. They, surely, understand the poor.

But we must not look at this question from the standpoint of recrimination. We have erred and, please God, we are sorry. We must see the present situation as our big chance, as a great opportunity. In spite of the horrors of this time, in spite of the urgent need for deep shelters, Spitfires, destroyers and big tanks there will come a time when war will stop and we shall be faced with the tremendous task of reconstruction. If we do not make preparations for that task now, we shall fail, and we shall deserve to fail as we did after 1918.

We must see to it that there is no malnutrition, no lack of health services, no painful little houses, overcrowded and badly situated; we must have no skeletons in our social cupboard. And the best of it is that it can be done. We can plan our educational services and our entry into industry. We can see that the over sixties have life and not living death; we can provide community centres where mothers can forget their worries—as they did at the Peckham Health Centre—rest and refresh their bodies. We can tackle the problem of unemployment.

The war, we expect, will be followed by terrible unemployment. If this is so man is not going to stand another twenty years of it; he is going to seek new gods as Germany sought—and found Hitler.

This, then, is our urgent duty. We must plan now what we are going to do immediately the war is over. It must be a practical plan, involving first of all a detailed knowledge of our neighbour. Regional surveys should be made, as one has just been made by Mr. David Goodfellow for Tyneside,* collecting and collating all available statistics with reference to population, housing, health, birth and death rates, infant mortality,

*Tyneside—The Social Facts—by David M. Goodfellow. Obtainable from the Tyneside Bulletin, 51, St. Georges Terrace, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2. 1s.

illegitimacy and so on. When this has been done these regional surveys must be related to the whole problem, so that in possession of the facts, we can bend ourselves to the task of reconstruction. There will be no 'new world' in the much vaunted political sense if there is no new order at home. We must abhor ignorance like a pestilence. Our first task, a task for all of us, is to make ourselves acquainted with the facts.

WHY NOT A MINISTRY OF FINE ARTS?

By STORM JAMESON

THE settled official attitude to the fine arts in this country is an odd blend of fear—mistrust, apprehension—and contempt. Fear of something which may be uncontrollable, and need not officiously be helped to put the wrong ideas into the wrong heads. Scepticism about the usefulness or reliability of persons who invent things for a living or to amuse themselves. “So I suppose you are at the old trade again—scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon?” Scribble, scribble, daub, daub—very praiseworthy when the result is a vast solid commercial success, a positive Cavalcade of a painting or a symphony or a novel, but, in the absence of that resounding proof, not reassuring to the official mind.

Both these feelings—the mistrust and the contempt—are instinctive. They are not—or shall we say, not often—present actively in the minds of Ministers and their subordinates, and if these persons ever attempted to give a reason for their attitude to writers, painters and the rest, it would scarcely be worth very much. Writers—whose business is to pursue motive—might do themselves and their fellows a good turn if they could discover why they are so often praised after they are dead and snubbed during their life, why so much lip service and so little corn. Perhaps the turn decisively taken by this country in the nineteenth century supplies one of the answers. The longer it reflected on the punishment that had overtaken the upper classes in other countries—the danger to heads, fortunes, privileges—the more mistrustful our own upper class became of too much cleverness and precision. Voltaire had been very clever, and see where it had led. A sound instinct warned our ruling class—it is more than a class—that the right course was not to suppress but to ignore. Where reason and logic would have led it to suppress and exasperate, reliance merely on instinct created an inertia, an awful spongy indifference to what the writer or painter, unless he flatters or tickles, may have to say. And this instinct to ignore through fear was strengthened by a quite different

reflection. To a society which was still happily certain that to become the universal provider to the world you needed only money and brute nerve, the disinterested intellect and all its works must naturally have seemed childish. Civilization was more turbines, more richness, more variety in food, clothes, amusements.

But lately an uneasy feeling has arisen among administrators that something should be done to present what one of them has called 'a cultural front'. The British Council was born—and surrounded at once by a strange air of embarrassment, as though it were illegitimate. The many admirable efforts it has made are the least noticed. Had it been decently born it might have stepped forward at once when war broke out, in the rôle one would have supposed natural to it. But did it occur to any Minister to ask the British Council to carry out the task, the urgent task, of putting our point of view before other countries? It seems not.

Neither, it seems, did it occur to anyone that, if the Council were ruled out for some reason, the persons best able to speak to the intellect and emotions of other countries must be the men and women whose work gives them a peculiar skill in presenting facts, in making an impression? Suppose Mr. Priestley had been sent for last September and invited to call up a group of writers and painters to explain England to the rest of the world? It was, is, a task for a man of humane imagination or for no one, and it would have been better to do nothing than to stumble from ineptitude to crasser ineptitude for months. At home as well as abroad, the gestures of the Ministry of Information were clumsy in ways that a mind used to playing on other minds would have avoided. Contrast the pleasure of English and American listeners to Mr. Priestley's first broadcasts with their indifference—sometimes their frank annoyance—to the Ministry's awkward attempts to interest them. It is not only the difference between the professional user of words and the amateur. It is the difference between the writer, trained to feel his way into other men's minds, and the politician, to whom thought is hardly more than a regrettable necessity.

It is possible to excuse a Government for hesitating to employ this writer or that in a position of very great responsibility. But how explain—except by this attitude of fear and contempt—the refusal to make use of writers as writers? It is a refusal, a considered policy, rather than oversight. Had the Government been making a modest success

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of its attempt to show England to the world and to itself, writers could not have complained when they offered their help and were dismissed with the advice to "Write a *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, everyone will like that". But the rejected writer has the mortification of seeing neglected or done badly the work he knows himself able to do. The 'epic of Dunkirk' is represented by a handful of little stories. The only account of the magnificent Calais episode was issued privately by the Colonel of the 60th Rifles and bowdlerized by *The Times*. Those elements of shrewdness and stupidity, dislike of officiousness, habit of patience, which give our nation its savour, are missed or vulgarized by the honest journalist or the fake science of mass observers. So are the griefs, humours, and the peculiar horror, of what is said and suffered in a bombed street. Had our Ministers between them an ounce of imaginative energy they would long ago have called in the professional writer, painter, musician, to help them in giving the country that sense of confidence and exhilaration which springs from a common danger and faith.

The mortifications of writers forced to watch amateurs bungling what they had better have left alone are worth recording only as a mark of the unhealthy intellectual state of a country where no liaison exists between the men of letters, painters, musicians, and the administration. This would matter less if London were a centre of intellectual life, if, like Paris before its fall, it gathered into a vivid focus the experiments and thought of all the arts.* But there is no centre. There are solitary sheep, browsing, one in this county, another in that; there are small groups each fermenting in its private tub, the neo-marxists, the audeneers, the mass-observers, the surrealists, the others. It may matter less than one thinks that each group lives in a little fog of complacent and often ill-founded satisfaction. Perhaps its members are doing the best they can. It matters a great deal that the opportunity does not exist to graft the separate activities of artists into a common enterprise, fruitful for the individual and the nation. It is a mortal pity that we not have a Ministry of Fine Arts, with its share in the national purse and its right to employ artists as naturally as other Ministries employ economists, statisticians, dons, even—sad to say—copy-writers.

*A distinguished French writer complained that in London it was impossible to talk about anything but the climate simply because it is the only subject on which a writer, a painter, and a musician, can exchange ideas. "If I ask an English writer what he thinks of your liveliest young painter he says, 'I haven't read anything of his; what has he written?'"

Nation and individual both lose by this divorce between the administration and the artist. The loss to the nation is incalculable. A new public building is at the mercy of municipal authorities who may manage well, or may put up a baroque town hall and decorate it with stuffed fish and antlers. Music can scarcely keep itself alive. The efforts to build a national theatre in London would be pathetic if they were not absurd and disgraceful. We rely on the devotion of individuals to plant and keep alive a few cuttings of civilization: on such strokes of genius as the National Gallery concerts begun by Miss Myra Hess. It flatters us to pretend that we order these things as well by individual enterprise as other countries with their States theatres and operas, but it is not true, and as a nation we are poorer for our wilful negligence.

The impoverishment of the artist is not less obvious because it is part of a widespread breakdown and disorder in social relationships on one side, and on the other in the relations between men and things. Vast groups have lost all contact with a normal healthy rhythm of life and become 'hands'. A suddenly accelerated technical development has made it possible for politicians to speak of 'human scrap', and of civilization as a wireless set in every home. The benefits of material progress have multiplied, even the 'human scrap' is not cut off entirely from them. And yet we are discontented, and not only because the wireless can only give us news of air raids. Our discontent has a moral and spiritual basis as well as an economic one: we have become rootless men, unable to like the society we live in, uncertain of its value, not able to relate it to any moral basis of living. It has become clear that certain ideas, present in one form or another in many minds, must be allowed peaceably to transform society if they are not to destroy it. And it is now, at this most critical moment of our history, when external war and an internal revolution are determining our future for, probably, centuries, that men of letters—whose business is with ideas in their precise and significant forms—are less used by the Government of the country than we have ever been. Since we know very well what is going on, we have not enjoyed being kept out of the way. Some of us went one better than we were told to, and retired into a world so small and private as to be incomprehensible, or merely silly. Others, determined at least to be politicians, have formed societies or joined movements, and on a ground of as much knowledge as we can pick up have become very indignant and didactic.

This fissure in our national life—it is not the only one, but it is peculiarly dangerous—is not bridged by the existence of half a dozen politicians who are also, with a varying right to the title, men of letters. The fissure remains: on one side of it an administration ever more harassed by problems which have their roots as deep in moral and intellectual ideas as in economic disorders; on the other the atrocious energy of the artist, turned in on itself, or shaking its fist outside the windows of Ministries. The spate of protests and manifestoes has been lowered an inch or two by the shortage of paper—thank God—but it can never, even in the best days of pamphleteering, have reached the mark of the last decade. One wonders what impression this paper barrage has made on the ranks of Tuscany. Little enough, no doubt. The inedited comment of an Under-Secretary on Mr. H. G. Wells—"I don't think one could ever make use of him: he can't resist the temptation to try to improve on us"—suggests one reason why officials do not like artists. But—it is unfortunate—not every artist is so uncompromising, restless, and sharp-tongued as Mr. Wells.

The work of a Minister of Fine Arts can only be done properly by a man of wide culture with a talent for administration. He must be familiar with the work of established writers, painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, scholars, and with the revolts of the younger generation against their elders. And he must be vigorous in imagining means of using all this furious energy to enrich the nation. It is probably better that he should be a scholar, or a critic, rather than in the first place an artist—an R. H. Tawney rather than a mere man of letters. But he will seek the advice of men of letters, musicians, architects, and the rest. He will recruit for his Department intelligent young men and women who, nowadays, sink into becoming dons or novelists. It is very necessary that he should not fill his Department from the ordinary Civil Service channels. At all costs he must protect it from that hardening of the arteries, due to fear of responsibility, respect for rules and customs, the hierarchic principle, which doubles the age and halves the efficiency of all the existing Departments.

The new Minister will find, camping in his field, every imaginable and unimaginable form of society for shoring up this and that fragment of the fine arts. England has never gone short of enthusiasts. If he is wise he will not serve notices on them. Instead, he will lay down a tradition of liking for unpaid enthusiasm; he will make use of them, even

subsidize them when they are doing his work for him as well as he could do it for himself. His field is wide enough to allow unofficial enthusiasts room to move about—no Minister will be able to do what he can imagine done: Chartres, he will remind himself, was not built in a century.

He will be responsible for public building all over the country—and not only for the building itself, and the suitability of its site. Through him painters and sculptors will be given the employment earlier artists were given by the Church in the cathedrals, and capriciously by princes. When it is a question of a housing estate he will have in front of him photographs and reports of housing estates in Sweden and other countries where the housing of families of small means is not looked on as a disagreeable necessity, to be got over as cheaply as possible. When we think what a civilized authority, with architects, sculptors, painters, at hand, could have brought off in place of the disorderly building and rebuilding of the last twenty years, it is difficult not to groan.

He will encourage schemes for showing the work of modern painters to people who cannot visit the great galleries. He might, for example, send an exhibition of Cézanne round the country—sending not only Cézannes borrowed from galleries or collections, but a few paintings of other artists which illustrate his development and place in nineteenth century French painting, extracts from his letters and letters about him, extracts from Roger Fry, the whole so arranged that a commentator is little needed: in this way half a dozen Cézannes could be made to say a good deal, and memorably.

He will give us an Opera House in London—and, which is perhaps more important still, he will help cities to support their municipal orchestras. And why not travelling orchestras? Is it too late to teach Englishmen to listen with their ears to music? A generation is growing up to whom music means a flood of noise produced by turning on a tap. Can they be taught better? Can churches be persuaded to restore the violins? It may be too late—short of a prohibition of music on the wireless for, say, twenty-three hours a day—to save our ears. The Minister and his musical advisers can at least try.

And, since we shall naturally get our State Theatre at his hands, is it too much to hope in time for a State school of ballet?

An extremely important side of his work will cover the endowment of books. And of research in a field which is very badly attended to in this country—the field of local history.

A certain number of works of importance to scholars and research workers are published by the Universities and other bodies. But the larger number of these necessary books must be published, if at all, by the ordinary commercial firm. Publishers, who are often literate men, will sometimes publish a book which is clearly of the utmost value to specialists, knowing that very likely they will lose money. They are compelled, moreover, to publish it at a price which puts it far out of the reach of all but a fraction of its possible readers. Serious readers are not always rich men. Thus a book which might stimulate research and speculation in many directions is isolated on the shelves of a few libraries, and the publisher rejects sadly the next valuable but unsaleable book which comes his way. Research into local history is still worse served, far worse: the most recklessly public-spirited of publishers hesitates to accept a monograph on stone-masons in a Gloucestershire parish in the seventeenth century. Nor is it so simple as this. The details that historians of the seventeenth century would like to know about stone-masons may only exist piecemeal in records scattered over the whole country, and the only way of discovering them, or enough of them, to be able to speak authoritatively about an important craft, is to write to the local archivist in a number of towns and parishes. Or it would be—if there were any archivists. Their appointment—attached, perhaps, to the local museum or city library—at a modest salary, will disturb the dust of attics full of unread documents. Universities and other research bodies will suggest and advise on the line of research to be followed in any area and, where an intensive special study is to be made, will no doubt find the Ministry willing to pay a share of the salaries of specially appointed research workers. The study of local crafts, and of towns and parishes, will occupy a great many years and several generations of historians, economists, archaeologists, persons who do not expect to be paid lavishly for what they enjoy doing. A Minister will be fortunate if, during his term of office, a small fragment of it can be said to be complete; or if he is able to agree that work can begin on another. Local history, valuable and neglected as it is, is not the only sort of research he will care to encourage. It will be natural—it will be a very good thing—for the Minister and his advisers to prepare to endow research in the way it is endowed by such bodies as the Leverhulme Trust, and with less arbitrary terms of reference.

He will keep up and, let us hope, double and treble the efforts

of the present British Council to form ties with the cultural life of other countries. There seems no good reason why he should send out English lecturers—it is an uncivilized habit—but his Department will go on arranging the exchange of artists, technicians, students, companies of actors; shows of books and paintings; travelling scholarships.

It is clear that a good Minister of Fine Arts can only be a man of imagination, enthusiasm, and—not least—discretion. He will be justified by the things he leaves undone as much as by those he does. A Minister who tried to censor art in the interests of any doctrine, however respectable, would be a bad Minister. So would he who was too much the civil servant and too little the man of imagination. Or who hesitated to get rid—to some other Department—of a worthy subordinate who spent nine-tenths of his time putting papers in a file and taking them out.

It will be said that the middle of a war—and a war which has subdued almost the whole of Europe to barbarism—is not the time to create a Ministry of Fine Arts. This is untrue and foolish. If when war broke out we had had such a Ministry, it would naturally have taken over the work, the double work, of discrediting the hideous Nazi doctrine and of mending our English reputation abroad. We should have been spared the initial mistake of asking the same Minister to influence opinion, at home and abroad, and to control, or at any rate seem to control the issue of news—which brings the unfortunate man into the bad books of journalists at once. And it would not have been necessary to improvise a staff of all sorts of people, including even a few writers—and then to dismiss some and engage others—and dismiss some of these and engage another few. And so, with purges and reforms and changes of Minister, to shift from policy to policy, expedient to expedient, a few of them good, some vicious, many of them only negligible. A Ministry which already had friends and allies in the institutions and circles in other countries where opinion is made, and had not a rooted objection to employing writers to write, would have started with an immense advantage. And at home? Would any man fit to be a Minister of Fine Arts have allowed his Department to disgrace itself by the imbecility of the Silent Column—a notion which might have suggested itself to a firm of advertisers? And, one might have hoped, to no one else.

If we had a Ministry of Fine Arts it would now have been busy stimulating the cultural life of the country to take the

shock of the war. *Pourvu que les civils tiennent*—this winter, between air raids and long nights, will take a deal of living through. Consider the chance it gives a man of imagination and energy. Why, in a year of war he might bring us to be as adaptable and self-reliant in our amusements and interests as our great-grandfathers.

If we had a Ministry of Fine Arts . . . There could be no better time to set it up than in the second year of a war for civilization, for the humanities, for the dignity and freedom of the individual. It would look well over against the antics of Dr. Goebbels.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FALANGIST STATE

By J. M. BATISTA I ROCA

IN the political history of Spain the 19th century shows a continuous struggle by the Spanish people for a written constitutional law. The last success came in 1876 under the monarchy, when a constitution was framed, which was superseded in 1931 by the Republican Constitution.

The National-Syndicalist revolution has not as yet produced any written constitution other than a number of separate laws and decrees. An attempt is here made to assemble these and so sketch the new organization of the Spanish State.

The Falangist State being organized on totalitarian principles, the rôle of the only existing party, that of the *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S. (Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional-Sindicalista)* is of primary importance. This political instrument was created by Decree No. 303 (April, 1937), usually known as the Decree of Unification, which welded the Traditionalists and the old Falangists together. On August 4, 1937 another decree formulated the organization of the Falange, and on October 19, forty-eight members of their National Council were appointed. This framework, however, lasted only for a couple of years, and on August 5, 1939, a new decree issued by General Franco modified the constitution and working of the Party and its relation to the bodies in control of the State.

A few days later (August 8) another law was promulgated by the Generalissimo, known as the Law of the Central Administration of the State, in which the powers of these bodies are further defined.

The keystone of the whole constitutional structure is the person of General Franco. He is Head of the State, Premier of his Cabinet, Generalissimo of the Army, National Chief of the Falange Party, and Caudillo—a diminutive derived from *caput* (and not from *cauda*!) meaning “leader”—of the whole country. According to Article 47 of the Decree of August 5, 1939, defining the powers of the Party, the Caudillo personifies all the virtues and honours of the Falangist movement, “since

he is the author of the new historic era in which Spain acquires the possibility of realizing her destiny. The Chief assumes in its entire plenitude the most absolute authority. The Chief is responsible only to God and history."

By the Law of the Central Administration of the State the Legislative Power is embodied in the Caudillo. He has the right to issue laws on condition that he informs the Cabinet.

One point of interest is the arrangement for his successor. General Franco decides secretly who it shall be, and the name is kept in a sealed envelope, to be revealed by the National Council when the time comes. This however applies only on the death of the Caudillo. The possibilities of his resigning or of the National Council wishing to depose him are not envisaged in the present legal texts, which seem to indicate that General Franco is bound to carry on his duties until death.

The Law of the Central Administration of the State sets up the Cabinet, composed of the following twelve departments: Foreign Affairs, Gobernacion (the equivalent of the Home Office), Army, Navy, Air Force, Justice, Finance, Industry and Trade, Agriculture, National Education, Public Works, and Labour.

When the present Cabinet was set up on August 12, 1939, three ministers without portfolio were added. These were: General Muñoz Grande, then Secretary-General of the Falange and Chief of the Militia; Sr. Gamero del Castillo, Under-Secretary of Falange; and Sr. Sanchez Mazas, Vice-President of the Political Junta. Its President, Sr. Serrano Suñer, also joined the Cabinet as Home Secretary. It is obvious that under this arrangement, while the ministers had the right to attend the meetings of the National Council only when subjects connected with their own departments were under discussion, four members of the Political Junta of the Falange had permanent seats in the Cabinet, which was thus under its control.

In recent months there have been signs of a change in the relations between the Party and the Cabinet. While all the ministers of course remain members of the National Council, and most of them of the Political Junta, the number of ministers without portfolio representing the Party in the Cabinet has been reduced. General Muñoz Grande has been dismissed from his posts of Secretary-General of the Party, Chief of the Militia and minister without portfolio; and more recently Sr. Sanchez Mazas, the Vice-President of the Political Junta, has also lost his seat in the Cabinet. The link between the Political Junta and the Cabinet remains assured by the presence in both

of Sr. Serrano Suñer, Home Secretary and President of the Political Junta, and Sr. Gamero del Castillo, who now acts as Secretary of the Party and is still a minister without portfolio.

The Law of the Central Administration of the State (Article 4), curiously enough, deals with the formation of two military bodies. One is the High General Staff, under the direct orders of General Franco and including the General Staff of the land, sea and air forces. The other is the National Defence Council, also under the presidency of General Franco and consisting of the ministers for Army, Navy and Air, and their Chiefs of Staff, its Secretary being the Commander-in-Chief of the High General Staff. When their presence is required, the Ministers of Industry and Trade and Foreign Affairs, as well as the heads of the war industries, may be called.

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There is no possible comparison between the influence of any party in a democratic country and that of the single official party in a totalitarian State. The party is closely interwoven with the State; in Spain it is an essential part of the fabric of the National-Syndicalist State.

The Falange party and its aims are described in Article I of the Law of August 5, 1939, as

the militant and inspirational movement providing a basis for the Spanish State, which, in a common faith and purpose, undertakes the task of giving back to Spain the profound sense of her indestructible unity of destiny, and a resolute faith in her catholic and imperial mission to set up an economic régime superseding individual, group and class interests, which will place increased wealth at the service of the State, of social justice and of personal Christian liberty.

Leaving aside such rhetorical effusions, which seem to be characteristic of the Falangist official literature, it may make things clearer to outline the organization of the Party and proceed to a closer study of its elements.

In every village and even in every district of the larger towns, there is a local group of the Party, run by a council under the direction of a chief. Above the local councils, each of the fifty provinces has a higher council, its chief appointed direct by the Chief of the movement, who may also appoint inspectors to supervise the work of the provincial chiefs and their councils.

The Party includes thirteen National Services, which give organic expression to its work, and through which a strong hold is exercised over the life of every citizen. Each of the

Services works under the direct orders of a National Delegate.

The Party also has its Militia, which is very similar to the Nazi S.S. and the Italian Fascist M.V.S.N.

The work of the Party is directed by a National Council of over 100 members, but above that there is the Political Junta, which holds control not only over the Party but over some essential aspects of the life of the country.

Affiliated members are divided into militants and adherents. The first category includes those who were already members of either the Traditionalist or the Falangist parties before these became fused into the present movement. The adherents are those now applying for admission. After a probationary period of five years it will be decided whether they may become militants or should be excluded from the organization.

A very important point is that all army officers are *ex officio* militant members. This is a step of the utmost significance for both the Army and the Falange, since it marks a break with army tradition. Throughout all the *pronunciamientos* and military dictatorships of the last century, and up to the time of General Primo de Rivera, the Army held the politicians in the most utter contempt. The officers for the most part believed that they alone were capable of saving the country from the mis-management of the politicians. The result of this distrust (which the politicians returned with interest) was that dictatorships in Spain rested upon the Army, without much co-operation from the civilian politicians. It might be said that the army officers constituted a sort of latent political force which was apt to seize power when the opportunity arose. The dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera was a very typical example.

The Republic tried to change all this and make the Army a purely technical body under the orders of the civilian government, with the officers as servants of the State, keeping clear of politics—a policy in keeping with democratic practice in all western European countries. The problem was not easy, when one considers that when the Premier, Sr. Azaña, passed his famous decree for the reorganization of the Army, there were 258 generals and 21,996 officers (excluding generals and officers of the Second Reserve.)

Under the Falange both the policies just described have disappeared to make room for a new conception. Army officers become compulsorily members of the Falange, a political party, and are subject to its discipline.

It may be remembered that in both Germany and Italy, at

the beginning of the totalitarian régimes, the Army was kept separate from the Nazi and Fascist parties, and was not permitted to interfere in politics. In Italy, army officers were expressly forbidden to belong to the Fascist party. Later however, the Army came more and more under the control of the ruling party. In Germany, after the dismissal of General von Blomberg and his friends, the Army became entirely subservient to the Nazi party. The present relations between the Falangist party and the Spanish Army would therefore seem to be based on the experience of the Nazis with the German Army. The officers, as members of the Falange, become subject to its political leaders and are pushed into the political arena. This measure, however, thought by the Falangists to bring the Army under the control of the Party, may defeat its own ends and sow the seeds of discord between the officers and the rest of the Falange. This after all would be much in keeping with Spanish traditions.

Just as the Junta has political control over the Party, the National Services form its organic and technical machinery, which embraces the whole life of the country. They cover the provincial and local organization of the Party, and so have a very close grip on every aspect of the national life, as will be seen from the list of their names :

FOREIGN
NATIONAL EDUCATION
PRESS AND PROPAGANDA
WOMEN'S SECTION
SOCIAL WORK
SYNDICATES (LABOUR UNIONS)
YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS
EX-SERVICE MEN'S ORGANIZATION
EX-PRISONERS' ORGANIZATION
LAW AND JUSTICE
COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT
TREASURY AND ADMINISTRATION
INFORMATION AND INVESTIGATION

Each Service is headed by a National Delegate or Chief.

Sometimes, in order to ensure complete accord between the Party and the Government, the same man holds office both in the Cabinet and as National Delegate: for example, Sr. Ibañez Martin, Minister and National Delegate for Education. The posts of National Delegate for Information and Investigation, and of Director-General of Police in the Home Office, are also held by the same man, the Count of Mayalde, who thus has at his disposal the organization of both State and Party in con-

trolling the life of the citizens. He was in Berlin recently, and Herr Himmler, head of the Gestapo, is now going to see him in Madrid.

The Syndicates (or labour unions) Service is worth considering by itself, since by its means the Falange controls all labour and the whole economic life of the country. Also, from the individual's point of view it means that persons unfriendly to the Falange are not likely to get work from the labour exchanges of the C.N.S. (*Central National-Sindicalista*).

The Falangist organization of labour is based on the theory of the vertical syndicate, which controls in a single union workers and employers and all the different stages of any one economic branch. For instance, the agricultural vertical syndicate will control not only production but also the distribution and sale of all agricultural merchandise. This idea of course differentiates the Falangist unions and their federation (the C.N.S.) from the socialist conception of a labour union, but on the other hand it brings them into line with the Italian Corporazioni and also with the pre-war anarcho-syndicalist organization of the Spanish C.N.T. This is not really so surprising, for the Fascists and syndicalist organizations have common progenitors, such as Georges Sorel for instance.

The law of Syndical Unity (January 26, 1940) abolished all existing employers' and workers' organizations, to weld them together in the Falangist unions.

Another Service of particular importance is the Youth Organizations. The training of the leaders in Nazi and Fascist camps has assured a similarity of ideals and methods with those of the *Hitler Jugend* and the *Balilla* organizations, in the military and totalitarian education of the boys and girls.

The men who fought in General Franco's army, and those who were imprisoned by the Republican authorities for their Falangist activities, form two other National Services. A number of labour decrees have made it compulsory for the Government and all employers to reserve 80 per cent. of their posts for men in these categories.

Apart from the Falangist Militia, there is the National Service of Information and Investigation, which amounts to a Party police, its agents having the right of search and of arrest.

Another important Service is the Foreign or *Falange Exterior*, formed of Falangists abroad. It is the equivalent of the Nazi *Aussland Bund* and the Italian *Fascio dell'Estero*, with

which it co-operates in many countries, particularly in South America.

There have been various contradictory decrees about the number of members of the National Council. When General Franco appointed the new National Council on September 9, 1939, he decided that the number of Councillors appointed direct by himself should be up to a maximum of 100, in spite of his original intention that there should be only 50/65 members. The Cabinet ministers may attend meetings of the Council in order to deal with matters concerning their own departments. The National Delegates are also *ex officio* members of the Council. The Caudillo is its President, and its Vice-President is Sr. Serrano Suñer, President of the Political Junta.

The duties of the National Council are to investigate the fundamentals of the organization of the movement, of the State and of the Syndicates, important national problems submitted to it by the National Chief, and important international problems.

As there is now no parliamentary institution in Spain (which differs in this respect from Germany with the Reichstag and Italy with the Chamber of Corporations) the rôle of this assembly in the political life of the country is all the more important. The ceremonies which accompanied the taking of the oath by the members of the National Council at the historic monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, clearly showed the intention of lending the utmost importance to this assembly, as a kind of Party Parliament.

The most important instrument of the constitutional organization of the Falangist Party and of the State is the Political Junta. It has been described as a Party cabinet alongside the Government Cabinet. It has a President (Sr. Serrano Suñer), a Vice-President, and ten National Councillors—five appointed direct by the Caudillo and five more suggested by him and appointed by the Council. In addition, the Under-Secretary of the movement and the Delegates of the following Services are *ex officio* members of the Political Junta: Foreign, National Education, Press and Propaganda, Women's Section, Syndicates, and Youth Organizations. One of the main duties of the Political Junta is the study and direction of any problem connected with the general trend of the movement. Since the Party controls the whole life of the country, it is easy to estimate the power of the Junta. Also in its capacity of adviser to the National Chief its influence is very great.

Prominent not only in the Political Junta itself but in the whole movement and the life of the State is the President of the Junta. Not only does he direct the activities of the Junta and the Party, but in the Decree giving force to the Statutes of the Falange he is described as "the permanent link between the State and Falange in order to ensure the necessary co-operation for the common political purpose".

Considering that this post is held by Sr. Serrano Suñer, whose family connections and personal influence with General Franco are well known, and who as Home Secretary controls the police and propaganda of the whole country, the political power of this man is obvious, and from a theoretical point of view only inferior to that of General Franco, although for all practical purposes he may enjoy an even greater control over the key points of the present political machinery.

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The reader may have found this article a dull one. Political comments—too easy and too obvious—have purposely been avoided. Only the dry bones of the subject have been given—the skeleton of the constitutional organization of a minor totalitarian State. There is no need to analyse the spirit behind it; it is all too well known. In the German, Italian or Spanish Empire the totalitarian spirit is always the same.

LAND OF THE DANUBE

BY ERNST KLEIN

IT is the tragic fate of Europe that the British statesmen who were responsible for their country's policy during the last decades were never directly interested in Central and South-East Europe. As far as British statesmanship was concerned the European Continent came to a political and economic end somewhere in the neighbourhood of Vienna. The passage through the Dardanelles was the only question harassing the master minds of Downing Street. All the other events between Constantinople and Vienna were of minor interest. A few years ago a British Prime Minister spoke the famous words: "The frontiers of Great Britain are on the Rhine." If he had said—and acted accordingly: "The frontiers of Great Britain are on the Danube", perhaps the development which led the world to this war would have taken another turn. On the day on which Vienna fell, began the siege of London.

Bismarck once said: "The man who possesses Bohemia is the master of Europe." Bismarck was a Prussian and only thought as a Prussian. For him neither the Balkans nor the whole South and East of Europe existed. He did not want to conquer Europe. He was satisfied with the work which he had accomplished. But that megalomaniac Austrian who continues where the Prussian Bismarck left off, wants to conquer Europe. He knew that the possession of Bohemia was not sufficient for the fulfilment of this ambition. He knew that he had to get hold of the Danube Basin. Not the Rhine, but the Danube is the stream of destiny for Europe and Vienna is the strategical and economical capital of the Danube Basin. A fact already recognized by the Romans. They erected on the present site of Vienna one of their strongest camps and put as a garrison one of their crack legions, the tenth.

Hitler marched into Vienna, and Bohemia became his easy prey. Now he does not need to subdue the Basin of the Danube by any major military action. All its states are at his mercy. And his troops are holding the whole west of Europe, from the fjords of Norway down to the mountains of the Pyrenees.

He may be driven back out of Norway and France and all the western countries which he conquered. But as long as he possesses the Danube Basin, that is Central and South-east Europe, he never can be beaten.

Not for nothing has he proclaimed this part of the continent Vital Space of Germany (*Deutscher Lebensraum*).

What is the Danube Basin?

It would be a great mistake to confine this designation to the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy through which the Danube takes its course. One look at the map is bound to show how the Danube Basin comprises a much larger area which, it is true, is divided by many political frontiers, but nevertheless preserves its character as a compact geographical unity.

At the point where the Danube receives the beautiful son of the Alps, the river Inn, on the right bank, near the old episcopal see of Passau, it enters that huge basin to which it gives its proud name and which stretches down as far as the Transylvanian Alps, including the whole territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, with the exception of Galicia which became after the first world war part of Poland and is now carved up between Nazi Germany and Russia. A complete circle of high mountains (in the north-west the Bohemian and Silesian ranges, in the north-east the Carpathians, in the east the Transylvanian Alps, in the south the wild Balkan mountains and finally in the west the Alps) forms a natural rampart round the basin. With it two halves are to be discerned; they are separated by two lower mountain ranges whose direction is from north to south, the Little Carpathians on the left and the Leitha Mountains on the right bank of the Danube. The western half comprises what formerly was called Cisleithania, the Austrian half; the eastern, Transleithania, the Hungarian half of the Habsburg Empire.

Flowing through the vastness of the Hungarian low plain, the Danube reaches Yugoslavia and afterwards Bulgaria in the south, thus embracing these two countries into its geographical and economic system. For a long distance the stream forms the political frontier between them and Rumania, which is land of the Danube as well as the others, perhaps the richest and most fertile of them all. Although these three kingdoms are situated outside the mountain circle surrounding the Inner Danube Basin they must not be excluded from its system. It extends its sphere of influence so deep into the Balkans that the rest of the peninsula cannot abstract

itself from it—even Albania, although now occupied by Italy.

The relations established by the Danube between its Basin and the Balkans, between Central and South-east Europe, are much stronger by far than all the artificial frontier-lines which politics try to draw. They are necessities created by nature, whereas political frontiers are perishable like all human work.

Out of these natural economical conditions the Austro-Hungarian Empire was born. It was not built up by violence and force like Germany. As long as it existed, these natural conditions, so indispensable for the development of a sound economy, remained undisturbed. Nature itself had established the most effective way of distribution between production and consumption within the Danube Basin. Its western half, Cisleithania, had inexhaustible water powers in the Alps; iron and magnesite in Styria; plumb in Carinthia and coal in Bohemia and Moravia. The Styrian Erzberg, one of the richest ore deposits in the whole of Europe, furnished first class ore not only for the needs of Austro-Hungary, but also for the Balkans, Germany and Italy. It provided the raw materials for the Skoda-works at Pilsen and the Rothschild-works at Witkowitz in Bohemia which are now in the hands of the Nazis too. The monster tanks with which Hitler's hordes crushed the Belgian and French armies were constructed in Pilsen.

In Bohemia and Moravia were also the most important coal mines, the product of which was far superior in quality to the coal of Westphalia and North France. Before the war they belonged to Archduke Friedrich, cousin of Emperor Franz Joseph, nominal commander-in-chief of the Austrian army and one of the richest men of Europe. After the peace of 1919 the Czechs took over all his properties and had to give them up to the Germans twenty years later.

Cisleithania was a land with a highly developed industry, a most efficient competitor even for Germany. Transleithania, the eastern half of the Danube Basin, had the function to produce all agricultural necessities for the western half, cattle, horses, pigs, fowls, wheat, corn and maize. Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Transylvania also had a very valuable export in wood of all sorts. The Balkan countries derived immense advantages from this economical situation, especially Rumania, which as the proprietress of the richest oil deposits in Europe enjoyed a most favourable position in the whole of the system. The only breach in the economical unity of the Danube System was the animosity between Serbia

and the Monarchy, becoming greater and more dangerous every day. It is not the moment to examine in this connection the causes of the fateful development. Nevertheless, it must be stated that one of the most forceful reasons for it was the egotistical attitude of the Magyar agrarians, who upset the foreign policy of the monarchy in order to exclude the Serbian competition from the Austrian and Hungarian markets. Serbia was pushed out of her natural relations with the Danube Basin and had to look for other markets. There is a saying: "The Hungarian ox caused the war." It is not so far off the mark.

This example is only too apt to show how decisive the economical conditions were which bound the Danube countries together. With the exception of rubber, cotton and nickel, the Basin was what totalitarian economy is accustomed to call autark. But in 1919, when the new map of Europe was drawn, this historical and economical unity was sacrificed to political considerations. The organic body of the Danube Basin which has stood the test for nearly one thousand years was torn to pieces, which instead of being woven together in a new order, were deliberately kept apart. The Successor States which either were created on the soil of the Habsburg Monarchy or enlarged by its provinces, started to build their own national homes. In order to strengthen the newly acquired national freedom they also wanted economic freedom. They tried to erect their own industries, which of course they had to protect by insurmountable walls of customs and taxes. Economic chaos was inevitable. It prepared the path for Nazidom's trade policy.

But worst of all: in 1919 national hatred and revenge were allowed to triumph over every reasonable consideration.

Before the war there were three centres of national strife and unrest in the Danube Basin. First: Bohemia, where Czech and Sudeten Germans fought each other with inexorable tenacity. More than once the Austrian Government tried honest mediation between these two nations, but all their efforts failed. The story of the *Böhmischen Ausgleich* (Bohemian settlement) is the tragic story of nationalist fanaticism. The greater part of the responsibility lies with the Sudeten-Germans who always were the wildest of wild nationalists. In Trautenau, a German town in Sudeten-Germany, National Socialism was born long before the present German Messiahs came into the world. The leaders of the Sudeten-Germans founded in 1888 the *Sozialistische*

deutsche Arbeiterpartei, an organization with the one and only purpose of fighting the Czechs. They had the same programme as National Socialism of to-day, the same anti-semitism, the same racial intolerance against other nationalities. It was the policy of the Sudeten-Germans who turned the Czechs into such implacable enemies of the Habsburgs, although the Sudeten-Germans themselves were the worst adversaries of the Imperial House and shouted themselves hoarse with the cry: *Heil Hohenzollern!*

The second theatre of national struggle was Hungary. The responsibility here lies entirely with the Magyars, who, proud and haughty like all so-called master-peoples, from the moment when they had obtained their own national liberty pursued a policy which had only one aim—the suppression of the liberty of all those small nations which had had the misfortune to become subjects of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen. It is true, in 1868 the Hungarian Diet decreed a school law which was to give free national education to all nations under Magyar rule. But this law never came into use and only served as a legal means to make the illegal suppression of the other nations possible. In the peace treaties of 1919 the Magyars were treated worst of all nations belonging to the losing side. They had to renounce half of their territory and more than the half of their population. More than two millions of their co-nationals came under foreign domination. It is no use to shirk the truth: they have nobody but themselves to blame for this fate.

The Balkans were the centre of the third national movement: the struggle of the Yugoslavs for union.

Before the Balkan Wars the peoples of the Peninsula fought against the Turks as well as against themselves. They were so intermingled that even the most objective award could not have settled their disputes. The Balkan troubles, therefore, were a permanent headache for the chancelleries of the Great Powers, especially the Macedonian question which Austria and Russia tried in vain to solve through the Convention of Muerzsteg in the year 1903. The revolution of the young Turks intensified the national and racial chaos in the Balkans and the Bosnian annexation crisis which followed it was the first signal of the coming storm. The Balkan Wars brought neither peace nor solution of the national questions. On the contrary—Bulgaria, robbed by her former allies whom Rumania had joined, never forgot that her national dream, the liberation of the Macedonians and the acquisition of Salonika,

was not only not fulfilled, but that, after having had to bear the brunt of the fight against the Turks, she had to suffer the loss of the Dobrudja. In the first World War she marched with the Central Powers, hoping to get her revenge. But this hope did not come true either and Bulgaria had to share the fate of her vanquished allies. Since then she remained hostile to all other Balkan States and even refused to become a member of the Balkan League in which Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania took part. Bulgaria bided her time. Bulgaria waited.

Serbia was favoured with much more success. After the Balkan Wars she became the predominant Balkan Power and proceeded with the help of Russia to prepare for the accomplishment of her sacred national ambition—the Union of all South Slavs. Since the Habsburgs had no Slav idea of their own to oppose the alluring phantasmagoria of Pan Slavism with which Russia rallied all Slav peoples under her flag, the Greater Serbia propaganda easily found its way into the Austrian and Hungarian provinces, inhabited by South-Slavs. Only the Croats showed not much enthusiasm. Their country, which had a rather far-reaching autonomy within the Hungarian kingdom, was part of the former old "Military Frontier" founded by the Empress Maria Theresa against the Turks. The Croats were loyal to the Emperors of Austria, not to the Magyars whom they hated as fiercely as the Serbs. They belong to the Western Culture, are Catholics and use the Latin alphabet, whereas the Serbs are Greek-Catholics, use the Cyril-letters and are as a whole in their culture rather a more eastern people, not to say oriental. There is bitter hatred between Serbs and Croats. And there will ever be.

All these facts, although well known, had to be set before the reader again in order to show how great the mistake of the Allies was in 1919, when instead of finding a just and durable solution of the problem with which they were faced in consequence of the destruction of Austro-Hungary, they gave way to all exaggerated claims of the Danube nations. These small states all committed the error of over-estimating their own national strength, meaning the larger their population the stronger became their state. To maintain their position as "State People" they then had to use force against their minorities and were compelled to make the same policy of suppression which they had fought themselves.

Even the Czechs, one of the most democratic of peoples in Europe, could not evade this tragic circle. They only

numbered $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions in a state which had $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of Germans, 1,200,000 Slovaks, 750,000 Magyars, 480,000 Ruthenes, not to mention the other nationalities, Poles, Jews, etc., who made up another half a million. Their position was so weak from the beginning that they were not able to fulfil the Treaty of Pittsburgh in which they had promised full autonomy to the Slovaks, who were consequently converted into their bitterest enemies. The Czech State broke up from the interior and it was doomed when Hitler started to "liberate" the Sudeten-Germans.

Rumania also swallowed more than she could digest. She received Transylvania, the largest part of the Hungarian province of the Banat, and the Austrian territory of the Bukovina. The 12 million Rumanians had against themselves 1,700,000 Magyars, 2,200,000 Ruthenes and Ukranians, 800,000 Germans, 800,000 Jews, 250,000 Bulgars and more than half a million of other smaller nationalities. How could that country, so backward in its social and cultural development, saddled with the problem of a continuously postponed agrarian reform, overcome its internal difficulties, with Russia, Bulgaria and Hungary waiting outside the frontiers for the right moment to get back what was taken from them? Just while these lines are being written, the news comes from Bucharest that German troops have entered the unhappy country. A second Czechoslovakia?

In order to secure the undisturbed possession of their spoils, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had concluded the "Little Entente" which was directed against reparation claims of Hungary and Bulgaria as well. It was considered the strongest military power in Central Europe. Whoever dared to attack one of its members would have to reckon with its 175 divisions! But the "Little Entente" could save neither the Czechs nor the Rumanians. Nor could it—even if it were still in existence—save the Yugoslavs, when the hour of fate strikes for them.

So far their country has not been touched. But it is allowed to breathe freely only as long as the Axis Powers, i.e. Hitler, permits it to breathe. The Greater Serbia had the same troubles with her nationalities from the beginning as Greater Rumania and Czechoslovakia. It was the fault of the Serbs who came into their new provinces not as liberators, but as conquerors. Even the Bosnians and the Dalmatians, although Yugoslavs in their heart of hearts, were bitterly disappointed. The Croats openly resisted, and the struggle

between them and the Serbs became so fierce that Stephen Raditch, the leader of the Croats, was fatally wounded by a Serbian deputy in the Skutchina on June 20, 1928 and died in a hospital on August 8. The Croats retaliated some years later with the assassination of King Alexander. The present government, with Prince Regent Paul at their head, are doing their best to come to an agreement with the Croats, whose leader, Dr. Matshek, even accepted a post in the Cabinet. But a real solution cannot be found as long as the Serbs, as the "State People", have to continue their policy of relentless centralization in order to maintain their supremacy. A state which is so weak in the interior cannot defend itself against an aggressor from the outside. The Serbs have also to reckon with the German minority, about 600,000 strong, and the Magyars who can muster half a million. Both of them are waiting for the signal to start disturbances on a great scale.

There remains Greece. Notwithstanding the sincere sympathies of the Greek Dictator for his German model, his country will not be spared. He also may be sure that, at the right moment, Bulgaria will present her bill of recompense which includes Macedonia, the town of Drama and the port of Dedeagatch. Bulgaria has never renounced her claim to obtain an access to the Aegean Sea.

Such is the situation in the Danube Basin and the Balkan countries belonging to it. Not a very encouraging report. A tale of continuous blunders, errors, of injustice and violence. The Axis Powers are well aware of the dangers with which even they are threatened by the present national and economic chaos in the Basin of the Danube, and they have therefore imposed on the Danube People what they are pleased to call the "New Order of Europe". Hitler gave to the Slovaks the freedom which the Czechs had denied to them. He presented Hungary with the southern part of the Slovakia where the Hungarian High Aristocracy have their estates. But he threw back into Magyar domination the Ruthenes of Carpatho-Russia, a pure Slav and exclusively orthodox people. He restored the Szecklers, a Magyar race, back to the Crown of St. Stephen, but he also handed over nearly a million of Transylvanian Rumanians to the Magyars. This is no solution.

This is the undoing of one injustice by another.

The only solution of all these complicated problems of "The

Land of the Danube" can be found by nobody else but the Danube people themselves.

It is to be hoped that they will have learned their lesson from the history of the last twenty years. They have wilfully destroyed the great organism which had been created by the natural conditions themselves. They have at last to construct a new one, solid and strong enough to secure order and peace for them all. They must have learnt that each of them alone, left to its own national strength, is too weak to resist the aggression of foreign conquerors. They must form the *Danube Confederation*.

They must arrive at this solution by their own free will. No foreign power has to interfere in this business of settling once and for all the order in the Danube Basin. At the moment that one foreign power tries to make its influence felt, the others will do the same, and the old game begins anew. No—the password has to be "*The Danube for the Danube*"!

It must be said that the solution is not very easy. There are first of all the racial and national questions which cannot be put out of the way by wars or by unjust awards. The nationalities in Transylvania and in the Banat are no less intermingled than those in the Balkans. Larger and smaller groups of one nationality are located like islands in the midst of another. The only possible means of solving this problem is an exchange of populations, not by force as Russia and Germany have executed it in the last year but with the free will of the people concerned and under the supervision of a disinterested neutral—a Swiss or a Swede, for example.

The difficulty of the economic questions is based on the fact that the whole eastern part of the Danube Basin is still an agricultural producer. And all its countries produce the same products. Therefore it is necessary not only to organize a just distribution in the Basin itself, but also to establish by trade pacts with foreign customers (Germany, Switzerland, Italy, etc.) a just distribution of the markets.

This is the starting point of the Danube Confederation. All its members, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Albania, are to have a common economic policy. Since such a policy cannot be pursued with energy and vigour without a common foreign policy, they must agree to have a common foreign policy as well. And it goes without saying that a common military force has to be brought into existence in order to give this common policy of eight individual states the right support. Things being as they are

in the life of states and their dealings with each other, the ablest diplomat can achieve nothing without a well-armed military power behind him. When the Danube States really unite, they will form a block of 70 to 80 millions strong enough to resist the strongest aggression.

Within the Confederation every member is at liberty to give itself the form of government which is best suited for its needs. There can be monarchies and republics in the Confederation. A supreme Council has to be formed which has the responsibility for the common affairs of the Confederation, but has not the slightest right to intervene in the internal politics of the individual members.

It would lead too far in the scope of an article like this to delve into the details of the constitution of such a Confederation. We can only sketch the outlines and have to rest content with the hope that after the final defeat of Hitler the Danube States will put aside all their disputes and jealousies of the past which made them weak and helpless, and form their Confederation, which will make them strong and able not only to defend themselves, but also to bring about the peace of the whole Continent of which they are such an important part.

ALIVENESS IN LITERATURE

BY SIEGFRIED SASSOON

I HAVE always had an aversion to expressing definitive opinions about literature. I enjoy picking up ideas from other people, but anything opinionated fatigues and irritates me. What I am about to write must therefore be taken as a mere good-natured exercise in discursiveness, and not as an attempt to lay down the law. Opinions, in the long run, are rather dreary things. They serve to pass the time and promote arguments. But here again I am at a disadvantage, for I have spent most of my life in trying to avoid arguing with persons who seem to prefer differing from their fellow bipeds to any other form of lingual employment.

The downright assertions of a man of ripe wisdom—Dr. Johnson, for instance—are valuable to posterity; but I enjoy them mainly for their revelation of the man himself. What Dr. Johnson thought about Milton matters no more to my mind than what Milton might have thought about Dr. Johnson. The tone of voice is what I care about, and the recovery—diminished though it must be in the lifeless print—of the dear old dogmatist in his natural habit of mortality. . . .

But I must 'start up' the engine of my chosen subject by postulating that literature never survives unless it was alive when written. No cold accomplishment of language, intellect, and art can ensure its preservation in the mind of the capricious conglomeration called Posterity. And this problem of survival power in the printed word is one which needs exploration. Why is it that so many unexpected authors have outlived their more august and acclaimed contemporaries? It may be because they conceived and wrote their works as human beings more than as ambitious authors, and expressed essential humanities rather than profound or seemingly original ideas. A few lines about a gooseberry tart may well be remembered and cherished while Odes to the Universe belong with the lumber of obsolete sermonizing and impenetrable sociology. Studying even the most imperishable authors, we value and retain in memory—not their notions

about lofty subjects but those human touches which keep them alive for us,—not what they revered or reasoned about, but what they loved or disliked.

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To generalize thus is dangerous. Let us look into the matter more specifically. Let us consider the novelists, for instance, adventuring no further afield than Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy. Bennett was himself and none other while describing those Five Towns which were the background of his upbringing. On the flavour and quality of those presentations of scene and character his reputation and readability will depend. As a provincial he excelled. As a man of the world he was far less successful. Wells is never so adorably memorable and humorous as when he is drawing on material derived from his early experience. (His imaginative writings come into another category of his munificent versatility). Galsworthy's masterly (though less vital) achievements are to be found in the splendidly drawn figures which he created from observing his elderly relatives in the days of his youth. The old Forsytes are the real thing. The younger ones are mere fictional contrivings by comparison, adroitly and sympathetically manipulated though they be. Here, in these three writers, we seem to have found a clue to the conundrum of what—conceivably—constitutes literary aliveness. Their best material was absorbed during the most receptive period of life; it is experience recollected and recreated with spontaneous gusto and constructive control. Such writings have the strong aroma of a greenhouse; they spring from rich and productive soil. The reader sits back with a sigh of relief, knowing that his author can be relied on to sustain the performance without striking a single false note.

It is my self-confirmed belief that when a writer is in his best form he feels his material with every nerve and fibre of his being,—is, in fact, in love with what he is putting on paper. (I wish I could say the same about this article). Something which has been stored up in him is finding its fullest expression. Good writers, I repeat, are most memorable when they are most human. It must, of course, be executed with acquired art; but the humanity is what 'does the trick' for the delighted reader. Perhaps I ought to point out that by 'humanity' I mean some quality in the writer which causes what he communicates to meet us more than half way. And I must add that the undissectable 'something' usually comes from his emotional creativeness. It is our author's business

to persuade his readers to *like* him. His small master-strokes of detail come from his intrinsic temperament. Hence the advantage of being sympathetic. Writers who score off us by brilliant exhibitions of ungenerous wit need great genius to put the lasting breath of life into their productions. Posterity prefers to be edified with kindness. Shakespeare knew this when he said that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

One remembers, for instance, Trollope's old clergyman, Mr. Harding, and how, in moments of absent-minded perplexity, he used to go through the motions of playing an imaginary 'cello. Who—having read that—will ever forget it? The picture is imperishable. It could not have been otherwise. Of such cardinal felicities we feel that nobody but that particular author could have evolved them. He has transmitted his indigenous aliveness, and we love him for it.

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I have suggested that our supposedly high-class literature does not inevitably retain its human interest. (By 'high-class' I mean written with eminent literary accomplishment). A lot of lifeless literature may continue to provide professors with pabulum for solemn researches; the longer an author has been neglected the more chance he has of being disinterred and made much of by some industrious specialist in the obsolete. But this does not constitute aliveness. A man of letters may even remain a great name and yet have ceased to be at all readable. Consider, for example, Chaucer and Spenser. The former (has he ever been called that before, I wonder?) has stoutly refused to become mere literary history. Through the full blooded homeliness of his Pilgrims he prospers undiminished, in spite of the unavoidably archaic language which he employed in putting them before us. His people have not lost their reality; they are our comfortable, though remote, kith and kin. Spenser, on the other hand, seems likely to fall into the hands of the literary experts of the future. With all its manifold beauties, *The Faerie Queene* strikes one as a somewhat ghostly performance. Its elaborate fantasy has no recognizable relationship to anything on the present day earth. It is noble literature and contains many magnificent passages, such as the well-known procession of the Vices. But has it anything approaching the vitality and vividness of the old Border Ballads? A few years ago I toiled through more than half of it and then gave up with a feeling that its interest was as

academic as that of Sidney's *Arcadia* and Raleigh's *History of the World*,—both of which I had previously attempted to peruse for their period quaintness. These—and many other splendid old authors—are best enjoyed in an anthology of memorable and finely phrased philosophies. We cannot read their works as a whole unless we are literary-minded to the exclusion of all else. Anyhow *The Faerie Queene* fatigued me. As fast as my mental legs could carry me, I returned to those scenes in which Falstaff is as inextinguishably alive as Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Jorrock. (Fat men, by the way, seem to have a much better chance with posterity than thin ones).

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It is, I think, obvious that writers are only people who try to button-hole us with what they wish to say about things in general and themselves in particular. The voice—and the man behind the tone of voice—is what matters most. In the long run, we don't much mind what he talks about, provided that he expresses the results of his own thought and experience with tact and intelligence—or better still, with emotional potency as well. The style is, admittedly, the man; but the man is also the style!

Our best living stylist in prose is Sir Max Beerbohm. Those who are privileged to know him (and those who were lucky enough to listen to his three broadcast 'talks' a few years ago) are aware that he has acquired the art of putting on to the printed page—in so far as is humanly possible—every intonation of his exquisitely sensitive conversational style. Sir Max is that *rara avis*, a man who writes as well as he talks, and vice-versa. That he will become a classic it is not for me to assert, though I fully believe that his essays will continue to be enjoyed in much the same way as those of Elia. What I do assert is that he has found the surest method of achieving literary aliveness. He knows the scope of his temperate and beautiful talent, and has never attempted to exceed it. (In my opinion the word 'talent' is an understatement). It may be more glorious to attempt mighty things and fail to 'pull it off'. But I am not dealing with ambitious immensities. A live trout is better than a dead whale.

While on the subject of style, I would like to say that much modern writing seems to me comparable to the staccato tappings of a typewriter. Meanings are indicated with energetic precision, but no concessions are made to any inward ear which enjoys listening to finely controlled cadences of

sensitive speech. This, I suppose, is merely a further proof that we are living in an ultra-mechanized state of society. But if it be true that the man is the style, I rather flinch from the idea of attending a gathering of modernist authors and being introduced to a row of hard-worked typewriters. After meeting one of my favourite living authors for the first time I have almost always exclaimed that he was exactly like his works. (I have also noticed that handwriting is peculiarly significant and characteristic). 'The man is exactly like his typewriter!' I utter those words as a warning to all whom it may concern.

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It is, possibly, worth pointing out that a notable exception to 'the man being like his works' was Robert Browning, who seems to have been a case of dual personality,—his genius independent of his everyday life in the presence of other people. (It would be interesting to know whether this was the case with Shakespeare,—though it is now too late for us to find out for certain). It is noticeable that the published letters of the author of *The Ring and the Book* make very tame reading; and even in the *Love Letters* he emerges as an unimpressive and unilluminating sort of amorist. Henry James wrote a masterly short story—*The Private Life*—in which he delineated the problem of the strange discrepancy between Robert Browning the poet and Mr. Browning the distinguished social celebrity. One of his Prefaces sums up the enigma in the following passage (a profusely elaborate specimen of the Jacobean 'late manner').

I have never ceased to ask myself, in this particular loud, sound, normal, hearty presence, all so assertive and so whole, all bristling with prompt responses and expected opinions and usual views, radiating all a broad daylight equality of emphasis and equality and impartiality of address (for most relations)—I never ceased, I say, to ask myself what lodgment, on such premises, the rich proud genius one adored could ever have contrived, what domestic commerce the subtlety that was its prime ornament and the world's wonder have enjoyed, under what shelter the obscurity that was its luckless drawback and the world's despair have flourished. The whole aspect and *allure* of the fresh sane man, illustrious and undistinguished—no "sensitive poor gentleman" he—was mystifying: they made the question of who then had written the immortal things such a puzzle!

While transcribing those inimitably tortuous virtuosities I found myself wondering whether Henry James, unbosoming himself in his 'late manner', wasn't asking just a little too much of our attentiveness to his meanings and implications. I thought of the enchanting lucidity of his earlier style, and

became more than ever convinced that simplicity and *directness of utterance* are inseparable from vigorous and effective writing. Henry James gradually got into the habit of talking to himself instead of to his audience. It was a miraculous performance, but too parenthetical to be overheard by anybody but his devoted admirers (among whom the present writer is most emphatically to be included).

By *directness of utterance* I mean a full and living voice with something urgent to communicate. Simplicity follows, quite naturally, since one cannot be elaborately urgent without failing to be vigorously effective! Simplicity and directness are attended by all the virtues which go with good writing. But when a man sets to work to do otherwise, Pretentiousness and Preciosity lift their heads with long sickly smiles of satisfaction. Wilful Obscurity throws dust in his eyes. And Oblivion prepares for him a comprehensive abiding place on the dust heap of the damned and disregarded.

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These remarks have now reached a point where I ought to safeguard myself by appending a few obvious after-thoughts,—such as ‘a writer’s work remains alive when he has happened to be one of those people who excite our curiosity and speculation,—Byron, for instance, or T. E. Lawrence.’ But that only brings me back to my supposition that the essential element needed is humanity. One might add that conservation of energy produces fruitful results (and that overproduction has been the doom of most authors ever since publishing became an overpopulated profession). But there, again I am merely repeating my tentative theory that a man’s best work is derived from his completely assimilated experience. In other words, a good book relies on living material from its author’s endemic mental system. Anything fortuitously introduced from elsewhere can have no permanent roots. The writer becomes a reporter. It may be argued that genius imposes its vitality on whatever it happens to get hold of. But genius has the advantage of being able to select instinctively.

In conclusion I can only suggest that the most vital literature is a re-creation of things remembered. A note-book in the pocket is often necessary; but memory, as someone said, is the mother of the muses,—memory transfused by emotion into an essence of the writer’s whole response to life.

IN SEARCH OF FLOWERS

BY W. L. CARTER

SHORTLY after the 1914-18 war I began the first of the botanical travels which, with intervals at home and some journalistic work, continued right up to the outbreak of the present conflict. The area covered in my journeyings has been extensive and includes from west to east in Europe, parts of the Near East, Egypt and into Burma.

I started with Spain, a far from popular choice. There have, of course, been notable collectors in that country but they are few in number as compared with other areas in Europe and elsewhere. Spain has been much in the news of recent years but to only a very few has she unlocked her native treasures of wild flowers and plants. Every type from purely alpine species and hybrids to semi-tropical kinds flourish within her frontiers and, although I have made nearly twenty trips, I am conscious of having barely touched the fringe of the immense array of the floral beauties of Spain. The Picos de Europa, a range difficult of access, which runs across the Asturian and Santander provinces, are full of flowering plants, and I spent one of my happiest collecting seasons in this district. There was a certain amount of rough living to be done, but I understand the provision of facilities for tourists is among the scheduled improvements in this remote area. Although at first my interests were only those of flowers and plants, I saw enough of the fauna in this district to use a camera to advantage.

The flowers were, naturally, mostly alpine. Many plants familiar to collectors in the Pyrenees flourished in the rock crevices, on the slopes and among the foothills, but there were also specialized local forms. A small alpine meadow yielded a very pretty variety of narcissus with golden trumpets which patterned the wiry grasses in company with some pink anemones. The daffodil stems were nearly a yard high and bore enormous blooms. With difficulty, I collected seven bulbs. These grew beneath a thin covering of fine soil, and had to be levered by a small crowbar out of a hard mass of dis-

integrated rock. Brought back to this country, they soon became established under normal daffodil cultivation, and have since proved to be an old friend about which Matthias de Lobel wrote in 1576 and mentioned by our John Parkinson in his *Theatrum Florae* in 1629.

These Cantabrian mountains offer scant hospitality to the visitor, and roads are neither plentiful nor good. We rarely expected, and were seldom surprised, to find much better than a good mule track in the fastnesses, although a fairly good road ran to the shrine at Covadonga. This last is one of those places where Nature's grandeur is unmistakeable, and, somehow, I could not refrain from mental comparison of this monument of early Spanish Christian resistance to the Moorish invader with that of the remote cave at Siyah-Sang near Chahar Bagh visited by Hsuan-tsang, "Master of the Law," the Buddhist traveller of the early 7th century, in the hope of seeing the shadow the Buddha left, so legend says, after his defeat of the Naga king Gopala. In this rock cleft hillside of Spain lies Pelayo, the first Christian ruler to stem the onrush northwards of Moorish hordes in the early 8th century. We climbed the sloping road leading up to the shrine, which appears from below as a white edifice resembling a small church built on a rock platform cut in the face of the mountain. To the left the river Deva has its source. The waters thunder ceaselessly, splashing down in a kind of waterfall clear of the rock face. We found some choice ferns hereabouts obviously flourishing in the damp atmosphere. Some young ones selected from among many thousands travelled safely home to England and are now sizeable specimens.

Several times, while working in this district, we heard falls of rock, and once, rounding a bend in one of the narrow defiles, we were able to inspect a fall at close quarters. The rock bore traces of ore content, and, indeed, most of this area is a potential source of metalliferous ores—lead, zinc, copper and iron, as well as sulphur—but it is in a totally undeveloped condition, although I have since learned this state of affairs is likely to be remedied without delay.

In the south-east of Spain we visited the Sierra Nevada which offers a great variety of plants to the collector. As always, I made a point of photographing good specimens of those species and hybrids one can obtain in this country, for it is unnecessary to spoil Nature's garden when the plants are already in cultivation. Of a few rarities seed was secured. We worked up to about 8,000 feet in most interesting country.

Rocky outcrops, slopes, ledges and rounded crests—some still with snow lying in the clefts and pockets at high altitudes, although it was midsummer—mingled with a gorge, goat walks and, in the lower parts, with the sun-dried and parched vegetation. We passed an extensive stony waste that appeared devoid of life, but a return visit early in spring revealed an astonishingly beautiful floral picture, a true wild garden composed of an almost bewildering mixture of colours and plants. Tiny thymes—some with white flowers, but all delightfully aromatic—merged into a *linaria* of a fine shade of very deep red with cool grey foliage. An occasional specimen with royal purple blooms was conspicuous. Spreads of a white-flowered flax with purple shading at the petal base mingled with dwarf spiny bushes of *erinacea*, whose blue blossoms gave them the appearance of little blue brooms. Blues were fairly common among the flowers in this area. One could give a lengthy catalogue of the plants and shrubs recorded in this natural nursery, but specially collected specimens included the choice *Dianthus lusitanicus*, with clusters of fine red flowers on twelve-inch stems, a small local *aquilegia* species with purple-blue blooms, a fine shrubby honeysuckle with greenish-grey leaves and heads of reddish-yellow blossom, together with a yellow-flowered *potentilla* and a curious *anthericum* with lily-like blooms.

A dwarf *artemisia*, a relative of the common wormwood of British gardens was, to our surprise, very scarce, but on the way down a valley, whose visible rocks were of ironstone, we overtook an old man and boy leading two mules laden pannier-fashion with sacks stuffed with plants of this Iberian wormwood. The local folk enjoy a kind of *tisane* prepared from its leaves, an inherited taste I think. I write with much feeling from the unhappy experience of having been unwise enough to sample a glass of what I shall ever be convinced was the pure concentrated essence of all the bitterness the wormwood family contains.

Goats are a nuisance to the plant collector in the southern sierras of Spain. Often we would mark suitable plants, intending to return when the seed was ripe, only to find nothing remained but the bare stump of the main stem gnawed nearly to ground level. One pair of these tough mountain animals stood on a fairly narrow track solemnly munching a mixture of choice *fritillarias*, a truly lovely blue *centaurea*, and an extraordinarily beautiful *erodium* with delicate ferny foliage and rose-red flowers whose petals were patterned with a net-

IN SEARCH OF FLOWERS

work of dark veins. No doubt a few specimens of pink-flowered *alliums* were consumed in an effort to add a more robust flavour to this floral diet.

At a high altitude on the Pichacho de Veleta, an 11,000 foot peak, we found a plant that formed a link with our work in the Near East. This was large-flowered buttercup, *Ranunculus demissa*, a colony of which flourished on the edges of melting snow patches. As might be expected, the locality was very wet, with rock *detritus* acting as a kind of surface drainage. I located the same plant in Crete growing happily in almost dust-dry conditions. Seedlings raised from both colonies have taken to our British soil and climate without difficulty.

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The islands of the eastern Mediterranean, particularly those of the Aegean, are the home of many small bulbous flowering plants. Some of them are local forms of wild flowers common in Britain, but there are many lovely species one finds nowhere outside the confines of the Near East, and the tulip is one of the principal families of this type. Perhaps it was the wild tulips of the hinterland of Asia Minor that attracted the attention of some of the Turkish mullahs at Constantinople more than three centuries ago. Species, as well as garden hybrids, were grown, and more than two thousand varieties were known. The Sultan Mahmud IV was a tulip enthusiast, and descriptions of some of those he grew have come down the decades. I was able to confirm from personal observation the colouring of one of these flowers. This was the variety Chorbaji Aladga, which is described as having a ground colour similar to that of the blossoms of the Judas tree, with canary-yellow stripes. Chorbaji was a Turk who first "exhibited" this tulip. I presume that to mean he raised it. He was said to live near the Galata Gate. If the ground colour truly resembled that of the Judas tree flowers it would match that of the splendid masses of bright lilac-rose—not the washy magenta that so often masquerades as this shade, but a clear definite colour—produced on the trees all along the coast of the eastern stretch of the Bosphorus. There is a white form I have occasionally seen in the Near East, but as Chorbaji Aladga means the "Magenta Lord," it seems fairly certain the type tree, *Cercis siliquastrum*, is the one whose blooms the colour of this old tulip resembled. Important mullahs and sheiks are known to have taken great interest in their tulips, and several unpublished works, still in manuscript, by such authors exist. Four centuries ago, tulip gardening in Turkey was on the grand

scale. Selim II wrote ordering fifty thousand bulbs to be sent from Aziz, the expenses being drawn from the Treasurer at Aleppo.

On the subject of royal tulips in Turkey one cannot well avoid a reference to the old building at Anadol Hissar on the Bosphorus. This—now falling into ruin—is a kind of one-roomed kiosk resting partly on the shore, the remainder hanging over the waters. It is said to have been erected to the order of a Grand Vizier of Selim II. This Sultan was what to-day would be termed a violently enthusiastic cultivator of exhibition tulip varieties, and the Vizier tried to copy his master. The ground about the pavilion is said to have been planted with the rarest and most desirable kinds, and the tulip *motif* even extended to a kind of wide frieze running around the apartment near the ceiling. This frieze was filled with painted reproductions of choice tulips, but very little of these can now be recognized, the building having been allowed to fall into a sad state of repair, although this occurred before the establishment of the present energetic régime in the Turkey of to-day. Most of its glories have departed. There are no longer any grounds planted with tulips, and I was unable to restrain a thought as to who had taken the rarities so carefully acquired by the Grand Vizier.

The Cretan *ranunculus*, mentioned earlier, flourished near the burnt-out ruins of the Minoan palace at Knossos, and near the main colony grew a shapely oleander bush. It was of the ordinary pink-flower type common throughout the Near East. Incidentally, it is from Theophrastus's reference to a rose of like colour to that of the oleander that we know at least one of the shades found among the roses of the ancient world. It was on this bush that I saw a specimen of the exceedingly lovely oleander hawk-moth. This insect was a study in beautiful greens and olive-brown marblings, with additions of white and pinkish-grey. The outstretched wings were quite five inches across. Crete is fairly familiar ground to the traveller-botanist. Most of its flowers are those enjoying hot dry sites, but the wild violets, parsley and saffron crocus form links with the ancient Minoan and Greek civilizations.

The saffron crocus, in particular, is common enough in the Near East. I have stood ankle high among its blooms in the vegetation of the meadows bordering the Hellespont, our modern Dardanelles. In spring they are thickly sprinkled with anemones of many types, and several wild tulips—the interior is a happy hunting ground for the tulip species

enthusiast—can be found without much searching in summer. The saffron crocus comes later, but there is no mistaking the gleaming flat chalices of pale lilac, whose centres glow with the intense orange-red fire of the stamens for which the plant has been grown and sought throughout the centuries. It was in these same Hellespontine meads that Europa was picking saffron at the time of her enticement by a bovine Zeus. I have seen many choice specimens of this royal flower growing in the wild, but two have always stood out in my memory. One thrived in a rock crevice near the so-called Treasury of Atreus at Mycenæ. It was inaccessible, and, as might be expected, was a particularly fine example of *Crocus sativus*. Of almost equal quality was a large clump I found growing among some rocks near the Scæan Gate site at Troy. This colony was an old one and some of the tiny bulbs—they are very small, not much larger than the tip of the little finger—had been forced out of the shallow layer of poor soil in which the clump had made its home. There were at least seventy half-opened and mature blooms, and these appeared to be a favourite place of resort of some finely shaded copper butterflies whose colouring was in harmony with the intense heat and brazen skies of that late summer. That night a terrific thunderstorm broke, the heavy peals echoing among the ruined towers of Ilium, while Scamander again gathered the storm waters into its usually placid stream, bursting the low banks and flooding the saffron meadows. The clump near the Scæan Gate was beaten flat, but several seasons later I sought it out and found it had not only recovered—many of these wild plants have astonishing reserves of vitality—but had actually increased and was displaying even more of the gleaming chalices than before.

There is one feature about wild tulips that rarely fails to surprise those who have seen none but the ordinary garden kinds, and I confess I have not wholly rid myself of a feeling of the unusual when finding some of them in bloom. I mean the habit of some species of producing more than one flower to a stem. Anything up to six blooms on a branched stem may be expected. Crete contains several such species, and one beautiful morning in late spring found me climbing up a rock gulley. The loose surface constantly yielded to one's steps, with the result that ten steps forward and a slide back usually left the net advance one of about two feet after a prodigious expenditure of energy. Towards the end the slope became much less severe, and the loose rock fragments changed to a rough grit, then passed into a blackish stony soil. On a kind

of flat platform, shielded from the north winds by a large rock, was a spread of a *saxatilis* tulip. The site was sun-baked for most of the day, and, of course, the drainage was impeccable. From each of the tall stems of a fine colony of tulips hung two bells of delicate lilac. The base of the flower was light yellow. I decided to collect one specimen but was compelled to give up after a two-hour effort. The blackish earth was rocklike in its hardness. The colony was obviously that of one founder bulb—probably a seedling developed from seed dropped by a bird—and this type of tulip species extends underground by stolons. Some seed collected later from this location has come true to the parent plants.

Another two-flowered species was encountered by me in the Lebanon Hills some years ago. This was undoubtedly one of the most difficult plants I have ever attempted to locate and to add to my collection. It is exceedingly rare in its own native habitat, and comes into bloom as the snows melt on the higher levels of the Lebanon range. I saw about twenty specimens altogether. They were widely scattered—three plants was the largest number I found in a single colony—and most of them were blooming on the very verge of a sloppy mush of melting snow and ice. One literally splashed and wallowed to reach the plants. This tulip species is called *Lownii* and has tiny stems which carry two nodding little creamy cups flushed with a clear shade of mauve. I saw no specimen six inches tall. After slipping and sliding along a narrow way between two large rocks I ended waist-deep in an icy pool formed by melting snows. The tulips grew in a little pocket on the other side. Seeing some old pods of seed on dead stems of previous years, I took some of this in preference to digging out a bulb that might or, as is more probable, might not have survived. In any event, it would have been a difficult task to accomplish, as there was no foothold on the opposite side and one would have been obliged to work one-handed supported by the other. I have done this on two occasions but it is very fatiguing, and standing on dry earth is vastly different from trying to work while standing half-plunged in a mass of dirty snow water. Some of the seed germinated, albeit very slowly, and towards the end of the spring of this year two plants thrust up their half-grown stems. My fears that the seed might prove to be that of hybrids in case the original plants had perhaps been pollinated by outside insect agency proved to be without foundation. The two specimens were true *Tulipa Lownii*. There was no mistaking the short

two-flowered stems with the little creamy-mauve blooms. Not all plant collectors are so fortunate and one does not expect many successes of this nature.

A large proportion of botanist-travellers arrange their work, as is natural, on a strictly scientific basis, with interest only in new and rare plants, but a few plan their schedules to cover a different kind of investigation. Part of my own work has fallen within the latter sphere. This arose of a long-standing desire to examine the sites mentioned by ancient and classical writers, with special reference to the flowers, herbs and plants named as growing there. Much of this is labour in vain with fruitless results, but occasionally one encounters a site whose flowers and plants might well have been described only yesterday. One of these places of ancient repute was the Macedonian garden of Midas, son of Gordias. Midas was the first recorded patron of the rose. The site lies within view of Mt. Olympus. I failed to find the old silvery-pink cabbage rose, the "hundred-leaved" rose of the ancients, whose fragrance has always remained the standard by which all other rose perfumes have been judged. But the glorious flower meadow near the reputed site, which Tertullian compared as vying in beauty with the orchards of Alcinous on Corfu, is one my companion and myself have never forgotten. There were thousands of tiny single fringed aromatic pinks. Starry relatives of our woodland bluebell grew along with violets, narcissi, and a kind of wild pea. Blue and white windflowers studded the site, picked out by a few yellow and fiery red kinds, while the spicily fragrant lilac flowers on the mountain thyme hung heavily with small bees. It was a true mead of ancient Greece, "soft clad with parsley and with violet". It was there I found a rare Grecian form of *sternbergia*, one of whose more plentiful forms is the lily of the field, with large yellow crocus-like blooms, so widely distributed in Palestine and Syria.

Most of the flowers mentioned in these notes now flourish in my English garden, where they have taken kindly to our soil and island climate. One of the advantages of plant collecting is that one's successes flower before one, whereas the failures do not obtrude but stay in their native haunts.

GAINING THE MASTERY IN THE AIR

BY AIR-COMMODORE L. E. O. CHARLTON

A STAGE has now been reached in the long-continuing air battle for, and over, Britain at which it is possible to take stock of the situation with a fair promise of accurate summation. Certainly it is hardly possible to over-estimate the advantages that Hitler holds. His squadrons are able to operate from a forward fringe of conquered soil which makes their flights to main objectives in our country a mere matter of minutes, instead of hours. In consequence the Nazi bombers can be escorted to their hearts' delight by Messerschmitts and are thus placed, presuming a proper and active co-operation between the two, to inflict a maximum of damage at a minimum of risk. The Royal Air Force, on the other hand, suffer an exceeding handicap. Targets in enemy territory proper are at such a distance from safe air on this side of the Channel that our own fighters are precluded, owing merely to lack of air endurance, from attendance on the bombers. Daylight bombing therefore, which is naturally the more efficacious form of air attack, may be undertaken only at great, and sometimes unjustifiable risk, our aircraft on such occasions being liable to interruption during practically the whole period of their flight, both outwards and on return. We are able, it is true, to escort our bombers, if need be, as far as the hostile aerodrome establishments on French, and other foreign soil. But these are, in their nature, short flights, partaking always of an element of surprise, and the objectives, looking at the matter exclusively from an air warfare point of view, are invariably of a military significance, the destruction of which cannot be expected to strike at the root of the Nazi air power. It is, in this connection, as if casualties were inflicted in the course of battle on the light advanced forces of the enemy, the main bodies, vastly arrayed in depth, being comparatively safe from danger and even impervious to attack. A further advantage to Hitler, engendered by the situation, is that his possession of the entire European littoral facing these shores confers on his air forces the ability to come

in simultaneously from many different, and widely separated, points. Thus our defending aircraft must necessarily be scattered as they fly to the attack, while the mere exigencies of replenishment, not to count some slight denudation by reason of their losses, must result in a thinning out in areas overhead which may be those selected by the enemy for his main thrust. So far daytime air action alone is the subject of this article, and it now remains in that consideration to lay some stress on the greatest disadvantage of all in the existing strategic situation. It is a somewhat subtle point and has not received that mention in press articles bearing on the subject which its extreme importance would appear to ensure. It is this.

In his various, and persistent, daytime air attacks on Britain of heavy calibre, hitherto chiefly confined to London and the South-East, Hitler is opposed entirely by our fighters, who alone bear the full brunt of the battle in the air, and who alone are liable to suffer loss. This is not said to cry down the strenuous and manly efforts of our anti-aircraft batteries, much less the protective curtain of the balloon barrage. Both indeed will play their parts. But in the consideration of relative air power, of the ebb and flow of casualties inflicted or received, and of, in grand terms, the Battle of the Air, it is the Hurricanes, the Spitfires and the still too few, Defiants that shoulder the responsibility for success or failure, and on whom must ever rest the burden of the struggle.

In that particular sense, indeed, the air fighting over British territory becomes a battle between the Nazi fighter forces and our own. For consider what would happen if our fighters were eventually borne down by weight of numbers, or if their strength became so seriously denuded that the sum total of their powers of resistance became a dwindling quantity. If such a lamentable result were feasible at all then it is not too much to say that the prospect of invasion would bear a different complexion altogether. The enemy bombers might then bomb at will, obstructed only by the anti-aircraft guns, a method of defence which, acknowledgedly, would be quite inadequate to cope with the situation. The enemy fighters could then fly low to the attack of whatever objective they selected, either troop formations, civilians in pursuit of their lawful occasions, or columns in movement, by train and road, to the vicinity of the landings. We would have insufficient fighters with which to bring the Nazi bombers down, to tackle the predatory Messerschmitts as they flew around on mischief

bent, and, worst of all, our own bombers, set to the vital task of sending the transports and the barges to the bottom, would be largely at the mercy of the clouds of Nazi fighters detailed for the purpose of preventing them. Our Air Force, in other words, would be largely, and in time wholly, withdrawn from the fray, leaving the ground and sea forces of the nation to meet the impact of invasion and defeat it, themselves being unprotected from the air. Here is a concrete instance bearing directly on the argument.

During the week Sept. 25-Oct. 1 we accounted for 257 enemy aircraft, a number that included the result of the brave day's fighting when 133 were brought down between dawn and dusk. During the same period we ourselves lost 82 machines, all of which, of course, were fighters. It is true that of the pilots thus involved no less than 36 were eventually reported safe, though it is fair to assume that a large proportion thereof would not be immediately available for further combat. Let us say, then, that as a result of that week's fighting we lost 82 fighters, the pilots of some of which could return later to the fray, while the enemy losses amounted to an all in total of 257. The result is highly gratifying at first sight, and on numbers, both machines and air crews, we have as usual scored a notable victory in defence. The real point, however, is this! Of the enemy losses how many were bombers and how many fighters? For if, as is very possible indeed, we can assign the round number of 200 to the Nazi bomber losses, remembering that the occasion of the fighting was to repulse an air bombardment, then the result is not so good. It would then indicate, in fact, that the enemy had lost 57 fighters to our 82, and this, considered as a battle between two fighter forces and bearing constantly in mind the vital rôle which our fighters have to play, so far from being a victory is in the nature of a reverse. In a nutshell unless we are able progressively to account for more enemy fighters than, of that type of aircraft, we lose ourselves the result, notwithstanding Hitler's bomber losses in the course of combat, is apt to go against us. It is in that little recognized fact that the kernel of the issue lies, and in the situation, thus fortuitously created for him, lies as well the enemy's main advantage. When, on top of this, it is remembered also that the Nazi air power, both in bombers and in fighters, is still preponderant to our own the significance of the relative bills of casualties can be easily appreciated.

So much for the situation by day as it exists at present. By night there is a different tale to tell. Our night-bomber crews

are very highly trained to attack specific targets, and a word here is, perhaps, appropriate on the subject of the reprisal bombing of Berlin. Such a proceeding is no mere matter of sentiment, founded on a disinclination to occasion wanton waste of life. If, for instance, we could be assured of a prompt and crushing victory if we indiscriminately bombed Berlin would we refrain on humanitarian accounts? Assuredly not, and well would we deserve defeat if we found it in our hearts to do so. The totalitarian aspect of this war has been forced on us by our relentless foe, and if our own civilian masses have been thus obliged to stand in the forefront of the battle there can be no objection, on purely military grounds, to the enemy's civilians assuming the same stance. Military exigency is the crux of the whole affair and, at present, we consider our methods more damaging to the Nazi war machine than would ever be the wholesale bombing of Berlin as an alternative means of compassing the same result.

In this, however, the enemy think differently and he has chosen to assault our capital, and other of our teeming cities, with the obvious intention of breaking our national will to war by bringing about war weariness. Actually he is consolidating our ranks and further fixing our determination at all costs to see the matter through. But the German is ever a bad psychologist and a poor translator of history, quite unable to conceive that hard won liberty is preferable to life. Our urban populations are showing enormous adaptability to their new way of life, while the ideas of casualty by bomb, of homelessness, and of hardship are become so common amongst them that they are losing the force of fear. It is, at the same time, of extreme significance, and a matter even for mild reassurance, that Hitler has had recourse to the mass bombing of cities. For it means, as plainly as if it were written large, that his day offensives, so promising of result and so well-conceived to achieve their object, have fallen far short of that which was expected of them. Our fighter force has not been denuded, and the logic of the whole proceeding has been over-set. He miscalculated its strength for one thing, and, for another, the bravery and skill of its personnel, coupled with the excellence of its equipment, has taken him badly by surprise. There is a growing fight-shyness amongst the Nazi pilots and it has been proved again, this time in our favour, that even in the air mere numbers will not bear down either the spirit of defiance that our own airmen show or the courage to endure of a stricken populace. Hitler has undoubtedly

experienced a serious setback in the air, inflicted on him by a lesser air force. That part of his war machine which conducts the battle above has been thrown badly out of gear, its natural steps have lost their military sequence, its motive power is being misapplied and there is no longer discernible an ordered progress of events.

All this has been accomplished by an inferior air power as far as numbers go. But ere long its numbers will be swelling as the Canadian trained personnel come over in the spring and the ensuing months, and as the output of machines, both at home and overseas, increases to a flood. New types will appear as the days go on to more than answer any improvements that the enemy may have in store. Parity, that much abused expression, will soon be reached and soon exceeded, and as those days accrue the far-famed *Luftwaffe*, already a terribly punished arm of war, will go down to utter ruin before the irresistible onrush of our pilots and air crews flying towards the enemy in veritable hordes. Before that near day our people will have to endure much. And yet they will endure it, for well they know the price of victory that Hitler would exact and, better still, the abounding cruelties that would accompany the military occupation by the Nazis of our soil. As it is it only remains for the menace of the night-bomber to be countered by some means or method for our day of victory to dawn. We do not need to fear the enemy in the air by day. We have already taken his full measure. Strictly speaking his activities by night do not amount to a military menace, for indiscriminate bombing cannot, in its very nature, cripple a country's war potential, more particularly when so much finished material is being received from overseas and manufactured in regions which will be forever out of Hitler's reach.

But we do badly need to relieve the suffering of the populace which is at present the chief recipient of the bombs by night. To that end the country's best brains are applying their talent, and meanwhile, by military device alone, we are progressing in the night interception of the bomber, as the steadily mounting figures for German casualties of late continually show. Meanwhile, also, our own bomber force is successfully, and constantly, engaged in striking at the enemy in places where he stores the essence of his air power. Results may not be apparent to the uninitiated eye, and weaker ones among us will still clamour for reprisals, but one day soon we will be glad that we went on hammering at the Ruhr, and elsewhere, instead of wasting our valuable resources by copying the

enemy's barbarian method. It is not a little that we have accomplished up-to-date. We have completely altered Hitler's plan of campaign and sent him seeking elsewhere, and in doing so our Air Force can claim, over the period of the enemy's air attacks on Britain, a resounding victory. Once we have attained material, as well as moral, air superiority it will be the beginning of the end. From that time history will date Hitler's defeat, commencing with a series of crushing reverses in the air, succeeded by a never-ceasing rain of bombs on his munition centres, and ending with the complete collapse of the Nazi war machine.

AXIS INTENTIONS

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR CHARLES GWYNN

WHEN Dictators meet in conference one cannot expect them to announce their decisions, nor is there much chance of leakage. We are therefore left speculating on possibilities and probabilities. German occupation of the Rumanian oil fields may have been the first result of the Brenner meeting and current speculation appears to accept the event as an indication that a German drive through the Balkans against Turkey and our interests in the Middle East may be expected. Obviously Rumanian oil fields are conveniently situated to supply the oil requirements of such a campaign and, threatened at close quarters from Rumania, Bulgaria might well hesitate to deny passage to German armies. Hungary we may safely assume has already agreed to allow Germany all necessary facilities in return for German support of her Transylvanian claims. Yet I am not inclined to accept the view that an attack on Turkey is imminent. It would hardly be welcomed by Russia, and Russia, so long as the British Empire can maintain the blockade and drain the resources of the Axis, is a power to be reckoned with; even if her military preparations are in a backward condition. Apart from that, in a war either with Turkey or Russia the Rumanian oil fields and their communications would be exposed to air attack. Rail and barge traffic might be even more vulnerable than the oil wells themselves. Is it probable that Germany would risk exposing her chief external source of oil supply while she was engaged in war on two fronts and while her internal supplies and reserves were suffering from the attentions of the R.A.F.? While Rumania was neutral she was of course entitled to supply Germany with oil without risk, but now her neutrality, if it still exists, has worn too thin to provide practical protection. A country that admits the forces of a belligerent without resistance and without attempting to disarm and intern them can hardly expect the immunity of a neutral.

Up to the present Germany has carefully abstained from backing her diplomacy in the Balkans with force, and she has

intervened to prevent local wars which would have interfered with the transportation of Rumanian oil or might even have led to damage to the wells. Is it not therefore likely that her latest move is primarily an extension of that policy which includes threats?

Naturally one cannot exclude the possibility that Hitler, knowing Russian unpreparedness, may consider that now is his opportunity to start the long talked of drive to the East while Britain has not yet developed the full strength of her Empire, and while the Italian threat to Egypt still hangs over her. The deplorable conditions in Syria afford an additional inducement. Yet if Turkey offered stubborn resistance the German armies, with a long line of communication to maintain, might find themselves committed to a winter campaign in Asia Minor and with many natural obstacles to be overcome before British interests could be seriously threatened. Unless Turkey's resistance broke down under threats the campaign could have little of the character of a "blitzkrieg". It might well prove an entanglement reminiscent of Napoleon's in Russia. When one considers that the actual striking force in Asia Minor must be limited in size and that the terrain does not lend itself to the use of highly mechanized formations; that there would be little loot to replenish supplies; that large forces must be maintained as armies of occupation in the overrun countries, and to watch Russia; that the threat of invasion must be maintained in order to immobilize the main British Army, and that all the time Germany herself would be suffering from the attacks of the R.A.F., the arguments against the project mount up.

The advantages Germany acquires by her move into Rumania on the other hands are obvious. She will now control the whole of the oil output instead of receiving only a share, and that share a somewhat uncertain quantity. She will be in an even stronger position to exert economic and other forms of pressure on the Balkan countries and to oppose a barrier to Russian influence or action. British interference with the output of the oil fields and its transportation is eliminated.

Should action be taken by Italy against Greece in order to divert British Middle East forces to her assistance no danger to the Rumanian oil would be incurred unless Turkey declared war on Germany. For Turkish, Bulgarian and Yugoslavian neutral territory would form a protecting screen. Greece under Axis control would of course increase the liabilities of the British Navy and provide air bases for attack on Egypt

thereby favourably affecting Italian operations in Libya and German co-operation in that theatre.

If Germany has no intention at present of embarking on a major drive to the East, as I confess I think is probable, it is certain that she must look for some theatre where she can employ her army to the detriment of Britain. It is the instrument with which she has so far won her victories, and it is inconceivable she will allow it to rust in idleness now that the chances of her being able to land it on British soil have become so slender. Although General Franco has evidently shown no inclination willingly to accept German assistance in furthering Spanish territorial ambitions it does not follow that Hitler has abandoned ideas of obtaining control of the western door of the Mediterranean, and Spain is hardly in a position to offer resistance to German insistence backed by force. The German Army is still we believe, in the main disposed in Western Europe and its communications with Germany must by now be well established. Rapid development of a campaign through Spain towards Gibraltar and North-West Africa would appear therefore easier to organize than a drive to the East. It would imply less interference with the air war on Britain and be consistent with the maintenance of the threat of invasion. Moreover, it would tend to divert part of the R.A.F. bombing from Germany on to the communications of a German Army operating in Spain. Synchronized attacks on Greece, on the Gibraltar area and on Egypt from Libya would, I suggest, tend to weaken our naval position in the Mediterranean and to isolate our Middle East forces more than a German drive to the East. It would be less likely to lead to Russian intervention or to the active hostility of Turkey.

In whatever light we consider the German problem we must not forget that it is no easy matter to transfer a great army right across Europe. The movement of fighting troops represents a comparatively small part of the problem. It is rather the transport of the administrative organization—supplies, munitions and repair establishments. For their campaign in France and for the invasion project there must have been numbers of well stocked advanced depots, and for a great effort in a new direction much of their contents have to be transferred across the Continent. They could hardly be left unused. We are told that the German railway system was in indifferent condition at the outset of the war and it has suffered damages and great strain since. Would it now be equal to the task of reorienting military effort super-

imposed on winter traffic, even though we may assume that rolling stock from the conquered countries has in a measure improved the position?

There is no doubt that whatever strategy the Axis Powers adopt our Middle East forces will bear the brunt of it during the autumn and winter. Except for air attack our home base is now secure. The danger is perhaps that we should suffer from a Maginot complex and either relax our efforts or direct them too exclusively to strengthening our already strong position to the neglect of dangers in our vital outposts. A time may come, if it has not yet arrived, when continuous attacks on the invasion ports would become to some extent waste of effort and when we might find ourselves with an undue proportion of our forces concentrated for home defence. In the Middle East, in fact in the whole Mediterranean area, our position, in the air especially, is none too strong and the enemy has greater facilities for concentrating his air effort there than we have. No doubt the situation is kept under continuous review by authority, but public opinion is apt to concentrate on dangers which most directly affect it. The Mediterranean and the Middle East situation is no side show but an integral part of our major strategical problem. As the chances of attempted invasion recede it grows in importance.

There has been an inclination to treat Graziani's slow and deliberate advance as a sign of hesitation and timidity. It would be safer and probably more accurate to look on it as a proof that Graziani is a capable general who realizes the difficulties of his task and knows how to minimize them. The manœuvres of the Italian Navy have certainly not been impressive but until it fails to make its influence felt at a time of crisis it is a mistake to treat it too much as a subject for derision. Concentration of effort at the decisive time is too well known a strategical principle to escape Mussolini's notice. Our own commanders are well aware of it, though it appears to be forgotten by those who are disposed to criticize our withdrawal from Sollum and the Libyan frontier. This is certainly no war in which we can afford to waste men in disputing worthless territory especially when it is possible to meet the enemy under more favourable circumstances.

THE WAR AT SEA

BY ADMIRAL SIR HERBERT RICHMOND

IN the September number of *THE FORTNIGHTLY* I remarked that if the enemy could pass some larger units than submarines or motor torpedo boats through the Straits of Dover we should have to expect to see larger craft working from the Channel ports, in concentrations against our trade. Recent events show that destroyers have reached the ports of Cherbourg and Brest, and it is to be supposed that we shall hear of others in L'Orient and not improbably in the Biscay ports to the southward. The bombardments of Brest by air forces and of Cherbourg by the Navy are reported to have done some damage to some of these craft. Valuable as such action is it is not to be expected that it will solve the question of getting rid of this threat, for it would be the height of optimism to imagine that they can all be sunk or disabled by this means. As we may leave out of account the radical cure of capture of those bases there remains only the defensive method of convoy. The strain which the defection of France has thrown upon our flotillas, weakened as they have been in this year of dangerous and unremitting work from Narvik to Dunkirk, is reflected in the rising tale of shipping losses. In the week ending September 22 these amounted to nineteen ships of 131,857 tons, sunk principally by U boats. We have had ample evidence of the effectiveness of the convoy system, but that effectiveness depends upon the fulfilment of two conditions; that the escorting forces are sufficiently strong, both in numbers and type, to deal with whatever attacks are to be expected; and that the protection is continued throughout the whole of the zone in which the danger exists—one of our greatest losses in naval history, that of the Smyrna convoy, occurred through an underestimation of the distance to which an enemy fleet had gone from its base. It appears that the submarines, or some of them, are now working at a considerable distance from the actual Channel approaches and it can hardly be doubted that the possession of the French ports has been of marked value to them. A recent writer on Sea Power

has said, in commenting severely upon the attempts to capture the Flanders bases in the last war, that those military efforts were a mistake; and that if one's ships are numerous enough and reasonably based themselves, it ought not to matter that the enemy may have useful bases too: the deciding element in the commerce warfare of the past was, he observed, the men-of-war and not the bases from which they sailed. This puts the matter too crudely. True as it is that the men-of-war are the executants of protection, the sufficiency of their strength depends very largely upon whether the enemy possesses bases conveniently situated. Until the defeat of France the only craft that could act in the Channel were submarines and an occasional aircraft, but when he came into the possession of all the ports in Northern France motor torpedo boats, which hitherto had not been able to reach the Channel, came into play, and now destroyers, threading their way under the cover of the enemy's coastal batteries, are in the Western ports. This, in its final analysis, amounts to a strengthening of the enemy's forces, so that it is idle to say that bases are of no importance. The wisdom of the transaction by which fifty American destroyers came into British hands is plain.

While there has been this increase in the activities and injuries done by the U boats there seems to be good reason to assume that the attempt at invasion has been suspended. It would be unwise to presume that the thing has been abandoned altogether for there is plenty of fine weather in the winter and the nights are long, favouring evasion. The threat will certainly be maintained even when the authorities give up the idea of carrying it into execution, for so long as we are unable to discover what is happening to the troops and other elements our efforts must be continued against the assembly ports and vessels, and the aircraft cannot be set free to operate against the submarines. What was originally intended to be an attack is transformed into a feint—an old trick in war and an inconvenient one for those upon whom it is played until or unless he can assure himself of the real state of affairs. In the meantime, however, a very large number of barges have been withdrawn from the inland transport services of Germany which, in the present condition of rail transport can only be a considerable inconvenience.

Turning to the Mediterranean, the Italian fleet continues to show no undue anxiety to make an effort to obtain command of the sea. The ruling idea appears to be that it is Marshal Graziani's army that is to bring about this desired command

by the occupation of Egypt and Palestine, thereby depriving the British fleet of its bases in the Levant; as the conquest of the Italian Riviera by Bonaparte forced the fleet away from that coast. The function of the fleet seems to be to assure the supplies of the army in Libya, making short rushes across the sea, covering the movements of supply ships. Such movements are difficult to intercept unless the fleet can lie in a position on interior lines, which it does not do in Egyptian waters. However, with our recollection of the fate that eventually befell the German Battle Cruiser Squadron at the Dogger Bank in somewhat similar strategical conditions, we may hear that the venture has been tried once too often.

It is not impossible that, as some predict, the Marshal will seek to assist his advance by creating trouble in our rear by air bombardment of the civil population in Cairo and Alexandria; for he is not noted for the nicety of his methods in warfare, and Italy did not scruple to bombard the unfortunate civil peoples in Abyssinia: and in Haifa and Tel Aviv he has used the same measure. It is a measure approved in Italy. It may be remembered that during the Spanish civil war the *Messagero* poured ridicule upon the idea that civilians should be spared and that a humane code should be applied to aerial warfare. War, said the writer, means breaking down the enemy's strength by any and every method available; a bombardment which blows a few people to bits is no more objectionable than a blockade that deprives them of food.* It may therefore be well that Italians should recollect that their coast is open to the sea and that 200 tons of shells can be as easily thrown into Naples and other spots as they could be thrown a few nights ago into Cherbourg. The deterrent of a threat to bombard was used by a British squadron at Naples in August, 1742, when the then King of Naples was preparing to stab the Queen of Hungary in the back in the approved fashion; but was dissuaded from doing so and induced to withdraw his army when Commodore William Martin appeared and laid his ships along the seafront, giving the king a short time limit to recall his army. It was withdrawn. A clear understanding that a similar punishment would follow a repetition of Haifa and Tel Aviv might mitigate the *Messagero's* enthusiasm for this extension of the war. A preliminary notice to withdraw the populations from the coast towns from Ventimiglia to Venice would enable the folk to be out of the towns in good time.

*Cf. *Times*, June 27, 1938, quoting an article in the *Messagero*.

Dakar was a singularly unhappy episode. Though the Prime Minister has assured us that the "mischievous arrival" of the French ships did not arise from any infirmity of purpose, it is difficult not to attribute it to some want of foresight and adequate precautionary measures. General de Gaulle evidently had good reason to believe that the majority of Frenchmen in Dakar was favourable to the Free French movement; but while fully accepting his assurances it was proper to remember the long record of disappointments of expectations of support from populations discontented with their rulers, from the Athenian expedition to Sicily onwards, and to be fully prepared to meet whatever situation might be found to exist. One asks whether the question was frankly put and faced: "But what are we going to do if opposition is encountered?" It was an obvious question and it demanded a definite reply. There is little to recommend in sending an expedition without facing the fact that it might have to fight and without deciding whether the thing was to be seen through whatever happened. Further, if the Vichy authorities were able to foresee the need for strengthening the garrison with its "bitter partisans" it should seem possible for the authorities in London equally to foresee the possibility that reinforcements might be sent, and in that case to take the most complete steps to ensure their being intercepted with an overwhelmingly strong force, and turned back. The Prime Minister has told the House that neither the First Sea Lord nor the Cabinet were informed of the approach of the French ships until it was too late to stop them passing through the Straits of Gibraltar. Again one asks, why was the officer on the spot not fully instructed beforehand that such a movement was to be prevented, and that all the dispositions necessary to do so were to be made, together with complete authority to act without the loss of time—and opportunity—involved in communicating with London.

A situation of an analogous character arose in one of our earlier wars and was dealt with in a timely and vigorous manner. England was at war with Spain, and France was a "Non-belligerent neutral" whose "pro-Spanish" sentiments were clear. The possibility that a French squadron might be sent to the Spanish port of Ferrol being foreseen, the Inner Cabinet in the persons of Walpole, Lord Hardwicke and Admiral Wager, gave the following clear instructions in advance to the Admiral concerned as to how he should act:

It is not his Majesty's intention to begin hostilities against France unless the conduct of the French squadron should make it unavoidable

by showing an indispensable resolution to attempt to join the Spanish fleet Upon the first intelligence you shall receive from any of your cruisers of the French squadron putting to sea and coming towards Ferrol you should endeavour to put yourself between that port and them and dispose your squadron so as to make it difficult for them to go into Ferrol without either using force against you or your removing from before that port You will declare to the Commander of the French squadron that though his Majesty is firmly resolved on his part to preserve the most perfect friendship with the most Christian King yet that you cannot suffer any ships of force whatever to go at this juncture into Ferrol.

With instructions on such lines in his hand the Admiral on the spot was in no need of reporting the movement of the French squadron or of awaiting orders as to what he should do.

One cannot say that the management of the affair at Dakar makes a good showing in comparison with some of the enterprises of the enemy.

THE MAHARAJA AND THE TORTOISE

BY MULK RAJ ANAND

OF all the ancient (and, of course, noble) princely houses which have succeeded in preserving, by natural and artificial means, the continuity of their blood stream through the ages, the line of the Maharajas of Udhampur, of the Suraj-Bansi clan who claim their descent from the Sun, by way of the God-King Rama, is the most ancient and most noble.

They are proud and warlike chieftains whose chivalry is a byword in Indian homes, whose jewels and diamonds and rubies and sapphires and elephants are coveted by all the shop-girls of Europe, and whose splendid contributions in men, money and materials to the British Raj, in bringing law and order to India, have been recognized by the Sarkar through treaties which appoint them the guardians of millions of the poor, and by the grant to them of various titles, certificates and scrolls.

Besides being confirmed a ' descendant of the Sun ' by special decree of the Government of India on the death of his revered father Maharaja Gulab-Singh and on his accession to the ancestral throne, His Highness Maharajadhiraj Sir Ganga Singh Bahadar was made Knight Commander of the Star of India (2nd class) for his services as an orderly to His Majesty the King Emperor at the Coronation Durbar at Delhi. And he was awarded a salute of twenty-one guns for supplying a whole brigade of Sappers and Miners and for his valiant services in the field and at home during the War. The Hindu University of Hathras had conferred on him the Honorary degree of Doctor of Laws for contributing lavishly to its funds and several women's clubs in America and the Hon'ble Society of Haberdashers of the United Kingdom had elected him an honorary member. Besides these a long list of chosen letters of the Latin, Arabic and Sanskrit Alphabets had accrued to his name during the years.

Be it said to the credit of His Highness that though he was gracious enough to accept all these honours and had, indeed,

in his younger days, been eager enough to seek them, the superabundance of these titles, mostly couched in angrezi speech which he did not understand, seemed to him irrelevant in his mature years, except as the necessary adjuncts of a modern existence like the beef hide pump shoes, and the eighteen carat gold watch studded with diamonds which he wore on special occasions with the ceremonial robes of the ancient and princely house of Udhampur.

For, in spite of his loyalty and devotion to the British Crown and his consequent assumption of the privileges that this devotion and loyalty brought in their train, His Highness had never really accepted the suzerainty of the dirty, beef-eating race of which even the Kings were used to wiping their bottoms with paper. He was a strict Hindu and, being true to the great traditions of his house, and conscious that its eminence among the princely houses was founded more on the spiritual than the temporal power associated with his ancestors, he only valued one title, 'Descendant of the Sun' and didn't care for the other decorations.

In fact as he grew in age he had been inclined to care less and less for the things of this world and more and more for the things of the spirit. But, since the habits which he had cultivated in his hot-headed youth and the responsibilities of his position as the head of his state did not altogether conduce to renunciation, he had compromised and accepted the appurtenances of a modern existence at the same time as he sought to deepen his faith in the invisible, ethereal God and cast off the false cloak of the flesh.

Now, as every one knows, even the greatest saints and prophets of this world have found it difficult to achieve the ideal of complete detachment or non-attachment. The Lord Buddha who preached the cessation of all desire in order to rid the world of suffering died of meat poisoning. And Jesus wept in vain. And Lao Tze suffered from pangs of bad conscience about his love of the world, and the gout.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if His Highness Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh failed in the pursuit of God. For this evil iron age imposes certain limits even on the most heroic sons of India: hedged in between a diabolical Sarkar, whose real feelings about him were difficult to discover in spite of his intimacy with the Political resident, Sir Francis Wimperley, and a people who were always clamouring for something or another, His Highness was in a doubly difficult position in realizing the great spiritual ideals of his inheritance.

The catastrophe which led to his disillusionment is one of the most important miracles of religious history in the world and has become a legend to all true followers of the faith, besides being the greatest spiritual crisis in the annals of Rajasthan since the Johur, the last sacrifice by the Rajputs when they were besieged in the hill fort of Chitore by the lusty slave King of Delhi, Ala-ud-din; and since the performance of Suttee by Queen Padmani, who burnt herself with her female companions rather than yield to the conqueror.

* * * * *

It so happened that as Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh reached the age of forty and felt he was getting old he sought the advice of Pandit Ram Prashad, who was both the high priest and the Prime Minister of Udhampur, to prepare an easy passage for his journey to the next world.

Pandit Ram Prashad, a clever little lawyer who had been able to maintain his position in the state for seven years, a longer term of office than had been enjoyed by any other Vizier, because he was superior in cunning to all the other courtiers, advised His Highness that, according to the holy books, on the appearance of every full moon, he should donate his weight in gold to the priests, entertain seven hundred of them to a feast in the palace and take to prayer, mentioning the name of God three hundred and seventy-five times on the rosary after offering oblations to his ancestor, the Sun, seated in the lotus seat by the edge of the Ganges every morning. If this ritual was not followed, said the Pandit, His Highness was in grave danger because, the access to heaven apart, he would have prolonged illnesses as the planets Saturn and Venus were clashing daily in the scroll of his horoscope.

As the palace of the Maharaja of Udhampur was situated on the edge of the desert of Rajputana and the river Ganges flowed about a hundred and fifty miles away up north, His Highness was hard put to it to understand how he could offer oblations to the Sun sitting by the Ganges water. But Pandit Ram Prashad had a more agile mind than His Highness, or, for that matter, anyone else in Udhampur. He immediately called Sardar Bahadur Singh, a contractor who paid the best commissions, and arranged the construction of a tank which was filled from the river Ganges by means of a pipe line all the way from Hardwar, where the holy river first enters the plains from the hills. The cost was to be a meagre hundred and eighty lakhs. And he presented this plan to His Highness.

Needless to say money was no consideration to His Highness Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh, as everyone knew who knew that he had given a hundred lakhs to the Sarkar during the war and had spent forty lakhs on a fleet of Packards which broke their axles on the rutted, unpaved tracks of Udhampur and lay rusting in the stables. So that when Pandit Ram Prashad laid the scheme before His Highness he nodded assent even as his bleary eyes, yellowed by the smoke of opium, closed in a half sleep and he sank deeper into the cow-tailed cushions, the carved silver handle of the long tube of his bubble-bubble dropping from his hand.

There is a sacred belief in India in a system of Government called the Ram Raj. According to this the monarch is regarded as the father-mother of a happy family, which not only includes the male and female members of the royal household but even the dirty, ragged, lice-ridden common people of the kingdom. Since it was said in Udhampur that all the Rajputs from the Maharajadhiraj downwards were cousins who once belonged to the same clan, caste and race, the belief in Ram Raj in this state was most intense. But though the kinship on which this belief was founded was not too obvious during those resplendent feasts which were held in honour of visiting officials at the palace, it appeared on other occasions, specially at times of national emergency when the people were asked to give up their own occupations and help to increase the prestige of their spiritual and temporal head by dedicating themselves to some duty in the service of the state.

When the plan of building a tank by the palace and connecting it by a pipeline to the Ganges was conceived in order to enable His Highness to offer oblations and prayers to his ancestor the Sun, all the manhood, as well as the womanhood, and even the childhood, of Udhampur was conscripted to help to build the construction and earn the blessings that would indirectly accrue to them through the Maharaja's realization of easy access to heaven.

Though there were some in Udhampur who thought the scheme fantastic, others believed that the Maharaja, who had once spoiled his religion by crossing the black waters and shaking hands with people who ate cow's flesh, and by whoring and drinking, was now returning in his old age to the right path. And they accepted a mere pittance from the contractor and willingly worked day and night, sweating and straining, with the thousand names of God on their thirsty lips and the roots of wild plants in their bellies, to complete the work.

It did not take many months before the long line from Hardwar to Udhampur was laid and a beautiful square tank was built, connecting the palace by means of three steps with the holy water.

With that large heartedness which was characteristic of His Highness' family, capable of the utterest hatred for the enemy and the most tender solicitude for those who had won favour, the Maharaja had all those who had pooh-poohed the plan of constructing a tank supplied from the Ganges, flogged and brandished, and all those who had helped in preparing the conditions through which he was to perform the prescribed ceremonies, feasted. And there was some weeping in Udhampur but also much rejoicing; and, as always happens on such occasions, the shouting and the laughter drowned the tears.

For a few days after these celebrations His Highness could not start practising the prescribed ritual of offering prayers and oblations to the father Sun, from whom he was descended, because it seemed difficult, after the feasts which were held on the auspicious occasion of opening the tanks, to settle down to the serious business of praying every morning, especially as His Highness had never been an early riser, and also because he was not feeling too well after the strain on his liver of good food during the banquets.

When a number of digestive powders had restored his liver somewhat the Maharaja developed gout in his left foot and that made it difficult for him to stir from the velvet cow-tailed cushions on which he reclined, swathed in bandages and Kashmir shawls.

This enforced delay in search of the kingdom of heaven fortunately gave His Highness time for some heart-searching as a preliminary to the prayers which he was soon going to undertake.

He asked himself whether the favourite young Rani who had come in the palanquin sent by the Maharaja of Nepal on the inception of the project for building the tank, was not right when she insisted on his having his proud beard, which spread in two different directions at the chin, shaved off. Did it really make him look old? And was it a fact that the angrez log considered a man young at sixty? If what General Bhola Singh, the Commander-in-chief of his army, had told him was true that by taking a paste made of the powdered flesh of a male bear's organs one could rejuvenate oneself and even become the father of a child, then he had only to set his hunters

searching for game and not despair or feel old at forty . . . Why impose on himself the duty of offering oblations and saying prayers, anyhow, when one could easily get the priests to repeat the holy verses for a little money, or even get them to say that the feeding of a thousand priests or the bestowal of gifts to a shrine could compensate for one's salvation by 'mumming' hymns? He had never learnt any sacred verses and formulas and, after all, what was he to say to the Sun if indeed he did go down to the tank at dawn and throw water skywards? The longer he reclined on the cushions and the more his gout pained him, the more such doubts and misgivings assailed him. And he twisted the hair of his beard between the forefinger and thumb of his left hand as he rested his head on his right. But a good mixture of opium and tobacco in the chilm of his bubble-bubble dispelled every thought and he succeeded in postponing the awkward decision for days on end.

Only for some curious reason Pandit Ram Prashad kept on plaguing the Maharaja with enquiries about when His Highness was going to begin saying the prescribed prayers. Besides the clashing of the planets Saturn and Venus in His Highness's horoscope, said the Prime Minister, the construction of the tank and the pipelines from Hardwar had almost emptied the State treasury. The only way of collecting new taxes from the peasantry was by sedulously persuading them to believe that His Highness' prayers would bring merit to the whole kingdom, as the prayers of no other person could. The fellow was so persistent that he nearly bit off the Maharaja's ears by his constant bullyings and naggings. And he absolutely refused to point any other way of securing the advantages of heaven, although previously he had prescribed the feasting of seven hundred priests in every emergency as a way of getting out of more arduous sacrifices.

The Maharaja's pretences about his indisposition, his ignorance of the sacred verses etcetera, were met by the argument that by attaining the purity of heart he would attain good health. And since His Highness could not confess that the real reason for his lack of pietic zeal was that he wanted to have one last fling before he regarded himself as an old, spent man fit only for the mumbling of prayers, he found himself in a corner.

One day, indeed, he burst into a regal rage and declared that it was not necessary for him, the descendant of the Sun, to pray in order to be taken into favour by his ancestors, and that no

dog of a Brahmin could force him to renounce life at the age of forty.

But Pandit Ram Prashad respectfully assured him that if, after spending all the revenue of his state he did not devote himself entirely to religion and he, the Prime Minister, was not given a free hand to rule the state in the best interests of the praja, he would have to declare the treasury bankrupt and beg the British Sarkar to force His Highness to abdicate and appoint a court of wards.

The Maharaja had no option but to submit to this threat. He, however, sought a few days grace from the Prime Minister on the plea that he wanted to learn the words of the *Gayatri*. And His Highness had perforce to listen to the recitation hundreds of times. Long before he had learnt the whole thing by heart he pretended that he knew it as it was the only way he could keep the Prime Minister's abominable nominee off the palace.

And at length the day was appointed when the Maharaja was going to begin worship on the edge of the tank and to bring merit to himself and his subjects.

With the beating of drums, the blowing of conches, the strikings of cymbals and gongs and the tolling of bells His Highness rose at dawn from the side of his favourite consort and, with his feet swathed in bandages, for he still suffered from gout, he limped down the three steps which led from the balcony of his Diwan to the edge of the tank where Pandit Ram Prashad, and the other courtiers, priests and people had preceded him.

The eastern sky was colouring with a rosy flush as the refulgent visage of the Sun, the ancestor of Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh, showed up over the rim of the hills beyond the desert.

After the recitation of mantras was over the congregation sat down in the lotus seat on the lowest step of the tank to repeat the whole *Bhagvad Gita* and to contemplate the vision of God in their souls with closed eyes, as is prescribed by the rules of Hindu ritualistic worship.

His Highness was afraid that if he closed his eyes tight to contemplate God he might fall asleep and tumble into the water. So he had to be vigilant if only to keep himself balanced in his seat. As he kept opening his eyes and shutting them, opening them again to shut them tight, he saw what appeared to be a piece of round green moss floating among the flower

petals and the rice which had been copiously sprinkled by the congregation during the singing of the hymns.

The continual hum of the prayers recited by the priests became monotonous and His Highness, catching himself half asleep, deliberately opened his eyes and scanned the landscape. Thousands of his devout subjects, who had helped to construct the pond, were gathered all round, apparently happy to be sharing in this communion which he had graced by his presence.

Feeling that he might be observed he bent his eyes to his feet. The curious piece of moss had now floated to his legs and was moving to his bandaged feet, as if drawn by the dirty-looking green potion which was showing through the bandages which the barber of the palace had wrapped round his feet. His Highness could not move his hands to throw away the scum, as he held them in the prescribed posture like the opening petals of the lotus flower on his knees. And yet he did not want the scum to stick to his gouty feet . . . He dared not move his body at all lest Pandit Ram Prashad should rebuke him for inattention afterwards. And yet he felt he must do something about it. In his panic he thought he could stir the scum away with a brief gesture of his feet without arousing the interest of any members of the congregation or the priests . . .

With one brisk little movement he stirred his left foot in the water and closed his eyes, sure that if he didn't see himself do this no one else would.

But he shrieked with a sharp shooting pain near the big toe of his foot and lifted his lids with a dazed look of horror in his eyes. A little piece of pale brown flesh floated before him and a stream of blood was spurting from the bandages between his toes like a miniature fountain.

'A tortoise! a tortoise!' the priests shouted and drew back with upraised hands and scurrying legs.

'The tortoise has bitten off the Maharaja's toe!' a courtier shouted lifting the piece of flesh from where it was sinking behind the disappearing tortoise.

'Murder! murder!' shouted another courtier.

'Blood!' shouted a third.

'Keep quiet! keep quiet!' shrieked His Highness as he felt half afraid that the Prime Minister would rebuke him for ruining the ceremony by this unseemly behaviour, and the millions of his subjects might regard this inauspicious accident as the harbinger of more trouble to come.

But the frightened priests and the cowardly courtiers fled up the palace steps. And cries of Ram! Ram! Hari! Hari! arose from the throngs of people on the other sides of the bank. For everyone now believed from the pandemonium on the three steps that some evil had befallen the Maharaja.

With a resurgence of princely pride His Highness stood where he was and, though his face twitched and he went pale all over, he waved his arms in the gesture which signifies the casting of a blessing, in order to assure the people that he could maintain his composure even when his courtiers broke up like reeds in a panic.

At this instant his own astonishment at his calm charged him with a greater degree of princely pride and he confronted Pandit Ram Prashad, the Prime Minister, who stood on the first step casting the shadow of his presence on the Maharaja, with an accusing stare in his eyes.

‘Catch that swine! Catch that robber, who has run away with my big toe!’ the Maharaja shouted, ‘Don’t stand there looking at me! It is your infernal advice which has led to this. I shall break your head if you cannot catch the culprit and bring it to justice!’

And, shaking his hands at the Prime Minister, glaring at the retreating figures, shouting, cursing, moaning, whimpering and angry, he stepped limply up the three steps, fainted and fell face downwards on the marble floor.

The woman of the Zenana came weeping up to the balcony and there was mourning in the palace as well as in the capital as if the Maharaja were dead or dying.

But with a dauntlessness deriving from the Himalayan blood in her veins, the favourite Rani, took His Highness in hand and issued a proclamation to the people under her own name, giving a full account of the accident and assured the populace that the Maharaja was well on the way to recovery, and would soon see that the perpetrators of the attempt on his life were brought to justice.

The Prime Minister now realized that his attempt to wrest control of His Highness’ earthly kingdom by pointing out to him the advantages of the kingdom of heaven had failed. And, recalling how even in the moment of his direst pain when he had been bitten by the tortoise, the Maharaja had kept calm while he and the other courtiers had fled to safety up the steps, he now felt afraid of the weak, opium-eating monarch whom he had thought as wax in his hand to be twisted as he liked. He did not know what kind of retribution the Rajput in His

Highness would demand from him if he didn't produce the culprit tortoise. And yet what could you do to a reptile to revenge yourself? Have it killed? But there would hardly be any satisfaction in that as most of the water creatures had cold blood anyhow. Apart from the Maharaja's words before he fainted, however, the favourite Queen's behaviour was menacing.

He forthwith ordered the fishermen of the village to lay their nets and catch the tortoise which had bitten the big toe of His Highness' right foot off, and he offered the prize of a rupee to the man who would produce the reptile dead, or five rupees to the man who would produce it alive.

It was not long that this prize remained unearned. For during the very next hour fishermen brought several tortoises, dead and alive, in baskets to the Prime Minister. Pandit Ram Prashad was hard put to it to discover which was the tortoise which had bitten the toe of his Highness' right foot off. And for a moment he was perplexed. But with that genius for inventing stratagems which is the secret of diplomacy, he had all the tortoises but one thrown back into the tank. And then, he went to His Highness' presence, bowed obsequiously and said: 'Your Highness' orders have been carried out. The tortoise has been caught. Would your Highness give the necessary commands?'

Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh's princely pride, fanned by his favourite consort's care, had crystallized into a stubborn sense of hurt dignity. His Highness shouted to the Prime Minister: 'Bring this, raper of its daughter, tortoise, before the court and let it be tried before me and let a just punishment be meted out to it and all the other culprits . . .'

It seemed a ridiculous thing for the Maharaja to want to try a tortoise in his court. But the Prime Minister was used to the strange and absurd whims of His Highness. He kept cool and had the tortoise brought into the court.

On seeing the reptile waving its head in the basket, His Highness ground his teeth in fury and, foaming at the mouth exclaimed:

'Bring the bitichod up here so that I may trample upon it with the foot which it has disabled!'

'Sire,' the Prime Minister advised, 'it has a sharp knife-like head and may bite the whole of your royal foot off.'

This restrained His Highness from taking the law into his own hands at once. But he pompously proclaimed:

'We, Ganga Singh, Maharajadhiraj of Udhampur, scion of

the Suraj Bansi clan, constitute ourselves as the supreme Judge of this court as well as plaintiff and prosecutor in this case. Let whosoever dares to come to the defence of this infamous tortoise who bit our toe speak in its defence. But be assured that if the guilt be proved against the said tortoise, then both the reptiles, the said tortoise and its counsel, shall be beheaded instantaneously in our presence.'

The redness in His Highness' eyes as well as the cracked fury of his stentorian utterance was obviously an attempt to imitate the violent and grandiloquent manner of public prosecutors in totalitarian states which he had visited during his last European tour. The Prime Minister came forward and said: 'I shall defend the culprit.'

There were whispers of pity, remorse and fear in the hall, as the nobleman, the courtiers, and the servants were sure that the bleeding, bandaged toe of His Highness was the surest proof of the guilt of the tortoise, and would, in being proved, involve difficulties for the Prime Minister since he had the temerity to defend the reptile.

'Acha then, proceed, you dog of a brahmin,' the Maharaja roared confirming the worst fears of the audience, his anger taking force from the pain in his foot.

'You are by father-mother,' said the wily Ram Prashad without being ruffled by the Maharaja's abuse, 'as you are father-mother of the people of this land. But I have been responsible for encouraging your Highness to have this tank constructed, and I have a plea to make.'

'Make it then,' said the Maharaja.

'Sire!' began the Prime Minister adopting the familiar and timeworn method of flattery: 'Your Highness is a scion of the Sun and, therefore the greatest and the mightiest Prince in the land. Your counsel is heard in far lands and your fame has spread into the farthest corners of the world, even in the lands of perpetual ice and snow, where you have travelled. But Your Highness may be pleased to know that, according to the holy books, it is a sin to kill a Brahmin, to be meted out with the consignment of the killer to twenty cold hells. Therefore I am free from attack from the highest as well as the lowest of the land.' Having secured immunity for himself with the aid of Manu's four thousand years old code, which is recognized in part by the Government of India and, of course, as a whole in the native states, he proceeded to apply his peculiar religious-forensic knowledge to the defence of the tortoise.

‘As for this reptile the sages of old prophesied that the God Vishnu would be born in the iron age in the form of a tortoise and would be transported through an underground passage to a tank specially built for it by a descendant of the Sun, and that by the sacrifice of a toe of the said descendant, the world would get the first sign that the God Vishnu, the antecedent of the Sun, had come to live in the old land of Rajasthan again. After that event the old ideal of Ram Raj, of a perfect kingdom, would be realized in the state . . .’

And he further stated that if his Highness would recognize this sign and forgive those whom he considered his enemies he would have a gift of a son and heir born to him by his youngest Queen and get a safe passage to heaven into the bargain. Otherwise, he said, a lifelong curse would descend upon the Maharaja: he would be made to abdicate and the Suraj Bansi Clan would die out.

‘Incarnation of Vishnu!’ mocked a courtier who had ambitions to the post of Prime Minister and therefore hated Pandit Ram Prashad and saw through his machinations, ‘Incarnation of the devil! that tortoise has disabled His Highness for life and it is made out to be the vehicle of God!’

His Highness’ vanity however, had been flattered by the Prime Minister’s explanation, though, driven almost crazy by the pain of his injured foot, he sweated and blew hot whiffs of breath even as he rolled about in a frenzy of indecision on the cushions on which he leant.

‘I have fulfilled my mission in warning you of the portents,’ said Ram Prashad to make up His Highness’ mind for him.

‘What proof is there?’ said the courtier who was the rival of the Prime Minister, that this is the tortoise which is, of all tortoises in the tank, the incarnation of Vishnu.’

‘What proof is there,’ parried the Prime Minister readily, ‘that this is the tortoise which bit off the toe of His Highness’ right foot?’

The Maharaja seemed to be overcome by the Prime Minister’s logic.

‘What judgment should I pass in the circumstances, Panditji?’ asked His Highness reverently of the Prime Minister.

‘I would suggest that you order this tortoise to be taken back to the river Ganges whence it came,’ said the Prime Minister. ‘So that if, as I say, it is the incarnation of the God Vishnu, it will come back and manifest itself again.’

That course of action appealed to His Highness' way of thinking. If it was really the God Vishnu it would come back and do something to reveal Himself, though he would not like it to do so in quite the same way as the last time; and if it was only a tortoise this would be the best way of getting rid of the nuisance and yet to save face about the brave words he had used and been unable to act upon. His Highness therefore delivered judgment accordingly.

In the law reports of Udhampur state published by His Highness' Government, in emulation of the practice in England, where justice is mainly custom and precedent, the sentence reads as follows:

'We, Sir Ganga Singh, Maharajaharaj of Udhampur, Knight Commander of the Star of India (2nd class), scion of the Suraj-Bansi Clan, order that the tortoise in the palace tank which is suspected either of being an arch criminal or the incarnation of the God Vishnu be exiled to the river Ganges for a year so that it can prove its authenticity by a miracle of divine will, etc.'

* * * * *

During that year a tortoise bit the five fingers of a washerman who was cleaning clothes by the tank, and a son of God was born to the favourite Rani.

At the instance of the Prime Minister, His Highness the Maharaja declared a public holiday to celebrate the latter occasion. And everyone believed that the God Vishnu had become incarnate in the old Maharaja and that Ram Raj had come to Udhampur, that it had become a perfect state . . .

EBB AND FLOW

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

THE world's ear has been filled with rumours of large and menacing movements, variously interpreted; but so far only one thing stands out clear. Japan threatened the United States with grave consequences if further assistance were given to Great Britain. Actual names were avoided but the meaning was unmistakable and the United States, giving it the obvious interpretation, moved definitely and decidedly closer to the defenders of democracy. It is widely anticipated that some arrangement will be reached between the two English-speaking powers by which the United States will relieve Great Britain of the necessity to defend her possessions in the Pacific—as well as those of Holland. If it is clear that Japan cannot just take what she chooses while England has her hands full, and must face the prospect of war against the American navy, war becomes much less likely. Japan is no more anxious than Germany to face a war on two fronts—which might so easily become three, if Russia, seeing Japan engaged with America or with China, chose to move.

The Far East

No doubt the totalitarians have some reason to complain that American indications are misleading. Nations which themselves make a religious cult of the martial spirit cannot understand how a people which regards war as a soul-destroying and abominable barbarism can ever be expected to defend its interests by force against a seriously equipped opponent. The truth is that the United States, or at least a great part of their citizens, think that European states are prone to become involved in tribal quarrels for no adequate reasons, and try to draw America in. Out of these broils the American citizen is anxious to keep America's young men; but threaten American interests and the change of temper is immediate. Nothing makes a nation so willing to fight as the conviction that it cannot be beaten, and the United States possesses or is possessed by this belief even more fully than Great Britain—without even so small a perception of the need

to be prepared that has always marked the English. Indeed they are so large and so important a power that threats are a novel experience; and the result has been a sharp reaction. Whether the idea of administering a caution came from Japan alone, or from the collective wisdom of the newly-declared Triple Alliance, is matter for speculation; but this is clear, the American people, who already had come to the conclusion that Germany's complete triumph would bring danger nearer them, now find that Germany's new ally warns them not to do anything to prevent that triumph. This warning will not be any the more acceptable because it comes from the Japanese; a race whom Americans do not consider their equals, but whom they regard as a danger.

Very reasonably they are taking measures on a grand scale to ensure the safety of their widespread interests. This however need not be expected to deter the totalitarians, who know that you may vote a thousand millions or ten thousand millions for an army or a navy, but you cannot have the army or the navy except after a considerable lapse of time—in which those whose armament is ready may have acted. All this of course is evident to President Roosevelt and his expert advisers, yet they, as was certain, decline to be intimidated. Still they do not go further than declaring themselves to be a final and gigantic obstacle to totalitarian ambitions—if Great Britain is defeated. They make plain their intention to supply Great Britain with whatever it chooses to buy or hire from them; and by a recent decision they have withdrawn these facilities from Japan. But this is very different from announcing that they would enter the war, which would mean, practically, pooling of financial resources and combining fleets with Great Britain. Such announcement would certainly keep Japan out of any active intervention in the European struggle; almost certainly it would avoid for America the possible necessity of facing victorious totalitarians single-handed. It is the one and only step which might lead to a sudden revolutionary collapse in Germany and a breaking of the Axis; but owing to the nature of democracy, which seems irretrievably fated to act always too late, there is no likelihood that such action will be taken unless and until Great Britain is on the very brink of ruin, when America's task would be far heavier than at this moment. Too many electoral assurances have been given that the United States will be kept out; and until the eleventh hour nothing weighs against electoral assurances. Then indeed they "suffer a sea-change" to something not easily recognizable.

Probably the issue of this war could be decided now—that is, in the course of this winter—by open alliance between the United States and Great Britain since this **Austere Regimen** would curb the action of Japan and stereotype Russia's passivity—ensuring thereby freedom of action to Turkey, which might have important results, and doubling the value of the guarantee to Greece, on which General Metaxas has not ceased to rely. But there is no use in counting up pleasant possibilities; we have learnt to live on a diet of disappointments. We have learnt also, however, that morale thrives on this austere regimen; so let us admit freely that while we do not see the least probability that the dictators will knock England out, neither do we see how England is to knock out the dictators—unless by the assistance of America or Russia, or both.

That means we must prepare for a war of exhaustion, which appears to be being done and done competently. London, the chief target for bombing, is being better provided with shelters and also progressively cleared. Irish papers tell me of an influx to Irish ports of women and children, bringing tales of destruction, but also tales of the coolness with which London takes the shock. After all, every decent man and woman recognizes that in this way of wars there is nothing like the appalling holocaust of picked young lives which we saw twenty years ago. For that matter there is nothing like the total waste of life; and the material destruction is not comparable to what France stood up to during those four years. Things are bad enough; anybody who cares to realize what the facts are in London should read a brilliant article by Rose Macaulay in *Time and Tide* of October 3, a typical scene is visualized in a few stabbing sentences—which recognize without emphasizing it the courage and the kindly decency of all concerned. But then she goes on to rage against the "bestiality" which we can only answer by other "bestiality". You might as well talk of an earthquake's bestiality. If somebody lets loose an earthquake on us, we have to answer back in kind, as can be done with these ungeological convulsions; and it has to be done for the sake of things that are more precious than life or possessions. The human spirit can be destroyed by submission and can be not merely preserved but enhanced by resistance. Was Verdun just a meeting of two bestialities? It is no time for sapping courage. This British people, this people of the British Commonwealth, is a far better people than if it had not fought the last war—for all its demoralizing

influences. Most of these seem to have disappeared in this war, the job is being done honestly. A young kinswoman of mine, moved over here from Ireland, writes that the whole affair seems "so much saner" when it is not viewed from the standpoint of a neutral state. People here know what is worth while, and are stripping off the unessentials. The odd thing is that if they are not actually liking their medicine, they are liking the sense that they 'can take it'. I met a man the other day whose house at his place of business near London had been bombed; so had the house in Somersetshire to which he had sent his wife; and he was jolly about it all—not at all ascetically; he had the help of a few "cheerers"; but he was no more dependent on them for courage than Dandie Dinmont—from whom I borrow the word. Like the rest of his countrymen he was—whether he knew it or no—animated by such a leadership as they have not had since Chatham.

* * * * *

Thursday, October 8 saw an occasion very good to write about. The newest recruit to the House of Commons, a young officer in uniform, Lieut. Randolph Churchill, **The Churchills** was led up to the table by the Prime Minister; the debate opened and the son saw and heard his father displaying his whole range of power in a discourse where every sentence breathed natural command: vision which can see all chances alike of promise and of menace; courage so confident that it counts on equal courage in the following. Mr. Churchill in the swirl of great events may not specially remember that afternoon, but the new member is little likely to forget his first experience of the House of Commons. Yet there was doubtless another listener for whom that day would be even more significant. The press published a photograph of Mrs. Churchill, at the door of 10 Downing Street between her husband and her son; and thousands like me will have thought with pleasure of her pride. But not to so many will that photograph have brought back memory of a summer more than thirty years ago, when a group of brilliant newly-married young men could be seen parading their brides on the terrace of the House of Commons. All those ladies were very good to look at, but only of one I retain a very clear visual image—perhaps for this reason: Mrs. Churchill had a face that one could not see without continuing to wish her happiness. So it is a happiness to think of what life has brought, in time's fullness to her door. It was a pleasure also

to hear on the wireless a discourse about the present House of Commons and its leader by Colonel Wedgwood, who occupies a unique position there; at the last election he stood as an independent and found no one to oppose him. Soldier he has been, writer he has been, but always above all a member of parliament working at his job like a galley slave, or an artist; and what he had to say was that he had never before seen the House of Commons so completely what he would wish it to be, and that its leader had no equal in this century or the last. There are not many persons from whom the House would value commendation; but I think it will be value what this veteran said—knowing his praise to be unpurchasable.

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Mr. Churchill's speech was masterly in its arrangement; after dealing with what lay (or was falling) at our doors, he widened his review progressively. Concerning **Mr. Churchill's** Dakar he cleared our minds of two disagreeable **Speech** apprehensions: one was that General de Gaulle had been both misled and misleading; the other that ministers had knowingly allowed the naval detachment from Toulon to pass Gibraltar. Both suppositions were firmly denied; what had happened was a failure in the naval intelligence or communications. Mistakes in the navy are not without precedent. But "the man who never makes a mistake never makes anything", and the navy has done and is doing everything so supremely well all the time that the human element of error must assert itself. In regard to Japan the speech announced firmly—but not provocatively, a decision to re-open the Burma Road. Spain, another country where issues hang in the balance, was reminded, with all possible tact, that the blockade could be extended to cover her coasts. Rumania was not mentioned, for the issue was no longer open; the party which has become dominant there has now the German protection which it desires—for what is left of the country.

From what Mr. Churchill had to say on his opening topic, one thing impressed me profoundly. He gave as grounds for confidence figures of casualties, and then went on to say that when Great Britain entered the war to redress the wrongs of Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Government expected to lose more lives in three nights than had been actually lost in four weeks. In other words he made it plain that those with whom the decision lay had thought it proper to face things much more terrible than have happened. He made it not less plain that

in his judgment they did right to expose the people even to that risk. What other politician would have insisted on this retrospective disregard of consequences? But this man has confidence in his own high spirit—like the rider who “throws his heart over the fence” before he leaps. And the eloquence helps. Everywhere the thread of his discourse is full of familiar locutions, it never loses contact with the most ordinary speech, and yet the pitch of style is so maintained that transition can be made easily and naturally to a lofty strain; and when the purple comes, it is no more a patch than heather flowering on a mountain.

We need not regret Mr. Chamberlain’s retirement, although the best opinions known to me have always insisted on his peculiar value in counsel. But a large part of the community held him responsible for the country’s unpreparedness—a responsibility which belongs no less to Lord Baldwin. Yet it is only fair to allow that these men are also to be thanked for this that Great Britain entered the struggle with reserves hardly touched. Clearly Lord Halifax did not feel that the withdrawal was in any way enforced, or he would certainly have shared it—and by so doing would have weakened the country. He is the kind of Englishman who renders great service when hard knocks have to be borne; but above all the kind which can be trusted to make wise use of victory.

We do not scuple to write that word: Mr. Churchill keeps it always before our eyes. Yet there is never in his speech—still less in that of Lord Halifax—the least trace of that *hubris* in which the German and Italian rival one another. It is not presumptuous to be resolute. There is no denying that Mr. Churchill pitched the key high when he spoke of the British people’s “solemn and inexorable purpose.” That implies more than the will to win; it implies conviction of the right and the power to punish and to redress—in a dedicated mission.

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AFGHANISTAN

By ROSITA FORBES

A HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN, by Brigadier-General Sir Percy Sykes. 2 volumes. *Macmillan*. 50s.

Sir Percy Sykes has a gift for presenting history, whatever the period as if it were modern texture. Above all he succeeds in co-ordinating the sequence and range of events so that, with a subject covering some 3,500 years and more than the half of Asia, continuity is always preserved. Describing "the transition from subsistence to civilization"—and its impending destruction in our own times—the author goes back to the Gothic cycle, which recorded the annual inundation of the Nile Valley as if it were a Hitlerian invasion and forward to the possibility of a Soviet advance through Afghan Turkestan. The tapestry of human and national life is gigantic. Here is a magnificence of drama, a pageant of great men in a great setting, but although there is every incitement to exaggeration, Sir Percy remains the most conscientious and exact of historians.

Susa to me is as the Garden of Eden. The 'great god' whose face was never seen, in the tower which had no doors, is the apple of the Tree of Knowledge. But the author of *Afghanistan's* first complete history remains untempted by legend and myth. His Sumerians

dwell in the biblical land of Shinar, erecting their strange ziggurats for the worship of their gods. His Elamites under Kudur Nankhundi carry off Susa's goddess and sixteen hundred years later the image is restored by the Assyrian Assurbanipal 'ruler of the known world'.

Early in the sixteenth century then, the first Aryans sweep across the roof of the world towards the material wealth of the Indian plains. Nineveh and Babylon play their parts—the Rome and Berlin of an earlier world with ambitions on a totalitarian scale. Sennacherib's hosts fight the Chaldeans, providing the unusual occasion of a fleet taking a port—like Alexandria in 1882 and unlike Dakar in 1940. Elam disappears and Susa becomes the capital of that decided original, Cyrus the Great, for the curious reasons recorded by Strabo that "it had never of itself undertaken any great enterprise" and like many a Central European city familiar as Prague or Cracow "had always been in subjection to other people". Medes and Persians, the law givers and philosophers, the horse-men of Scythia, Ariaramnes described as "Great King, King of Kings whose land of Parsa possessed good horses and virile men", Cimmerians, Achæmenians and Egyptians provide the scarlet

threads of invasion in the vast and complicated patterns from which Central Asian history has evolved.

Sir Percy has contrived a monumental work of reference by scaling successive paragraph headings as if they were the rungs of a ladder leading from his earliest references in the pre-historic period to the post history which may develop if Russia and Germany fight for the oil suzerainty on our own roads to India. But he has not lost the stimulus of adventure which caused the Helmand and the Oxus rivers to run red with bold, raiding blood long before Alexander sought his new worlds across the double ranges of the Hindu Kush. Persepolis, with its Hall of One Hundred Columns burned like Amsterdam and the Macedonians achieved as swift military successes as Hitler in an equally precipitous advance into Bactria and Seistan.

Of wars, a multitude of wars, Parthian, Indian, Chinese, British and Afghan Sir Percy writes with the practical perceptions of a soldier, but he is also a philosopher. Buddhism, Hinduism, the creeds of Confucius or Zoroaster, the worship of sun, fire and stone, of force, of oil, of machinery lead inevitably from Mithridates to the young Zahir Shah, ruler of modern Afghanistan and his Prime Minister-uncle, Hashim Khan, said to be the wisest man in Asia to-day. They lead also from Baber, founder of the Moghul Empire in India to Stalin's imperialist aims which are—in effect—not unlike those of Lord Curzon. The history of aggression is not new. The skulls piled by succeeding conquerors along the Seravshan river, the towers of Nadir Shah invading India across the Sea of Sand and the Sea of Salt,

Tamerlane's markets in Samarkand, the fortifications of Ghazni and the imperative walls of Jellalabad are the symbols or the signposts of totalitarian ambitions.

Afghanistan has always been the Switzerland of Central Asia. She was the buffer between diverse Indian empires, successors to Asoka, whom a Jewish historian described as the "last civilized Dictator", and the greed of Persia or Bokhara. The Shahs of the first and the Emirs of the second have bequeathed their ambitions to Russia. But the small mountain land of Afghanistan, fanatically independent, last stronghold of feudal and puritan Islam in Asia, yet sharply divided between the warrior tribes of the south, blood brothers of the Indian Pathans, and the nomad Turkoman shepherds, pacifists north of the Hindu Kush—this modern Afghanistan, for which Amanullah hoped to contrive the evolution of a century within a few hectic years, has inherited the problem.

Moscow takes the place of Bokhara. Kabul and Kandahar are still the keys of India. The Oxus, where from Herat and Maimana, two Afghan divisions watch for Soviet activity, is the frontier of two different civilizations, one traditional and the other experimental. It is more than 2,000 miles from Moscow to Quetta or the Khyber Pass, but German engineers and technicians, Japanese commercial and industrial agents have reinforced the Axis interests in Central Asia. Already Turkestan is largely German in initiative. So Sir Percy writes not only of thirty centuries in which races were formed, empires were created and destroyed, but of an equally vital present, in which the greatest issues of civilization

must be decided. His mighty history concludes with the strategical position of Afghanistan in the future struggle between democracy and dictatorship. "Courage", said Dr. Johnson, "is the greatest of all virtues." The great Afghan Amir, Rahman Khan, architect of national unity repeated that "all the virtues could be grafted on the stock of courage". Sir Percy has courage in the highest degree for the magnitude of the work he has achieved in 824 pages is only comparable with his leadership of the South Persia Rifles which he raised and maintained for years in a continent disastrously and desperately at war.

BARBARIANS AND PHILISTINES :
Democracy and the Public Schools,
 by T. C. Worsley. *Robert Hale.*
 10s. 6d.

The public school system, pride of nineteenth-century England, is a favourite target of our sharp-shooters of the Left. Nor is it only the professional reformer who has serious fault to find with the English conception of a 'liberal' education. Many of us see only too plainly that "defective intelligence, defective imagination and a defective understanding of the world we live in, have landed us in the present mess". To blame it all on the sahibs, however, the 80 or 90 per cent. of the ruling class who are public school-trained, seems a little hard when those shortcomings are really the outcome of our distinctive island story (and in any case the products of Continental schooling scarcely make a better showing—to judge, for instance, by the paucity of leadership in France). But this is no ordinary condemnation of the public school system—though Mr. Worsley

wields a pretty flail. It is a serious critical study of the place of the public schools in the social pattern of this country. And the author, while outlining an attractive "idealized sketch" for a *democratic* national system, on the lines along which the Spens Report and the best official and semi-official opinion seems to be moving, appreciates that the change required is primarily on the social plane, education being itself the product rather than the matrix of society.

Historically Mr. Worsley sees the social purpose of the public schools to have been the training of an oligarchy of rulers—and incidentally a class oligarchy serving class interests. By a characteristic English compromise the wild, tough and adventurous tradition associated with the schooling of the gentry and professional classes (the Barbarians, in Matthew Arnold's phrase) was fused with the puritanical strain endemic in the rising middle classes (the Philistines), and it was the historic rôle of Dr. Arnold of Rugby to build the bridge. But "the Barbarian tradition, if it was tamed, was never transformed or infused with the Liberal spirit". By the latter Mr. Worsley means, apparently, the line of education descending from the Dissenting Academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which is symbolized in the names of Franklin and Priestley—with its emphasis on rational, scientific, humane and democratic elements. This reflex of progress, Mr. Worsley argues, did not so much as influence the English tradition (as it does to this day in the Dominions and America)—which is, after all, only another demonstration of our island spell, of our essential irrational Englishness. Sanderson of

Oundle, providing workshops and libraries with the idea that boys should, for some specific purpose, *find out* the things they required, was the one deviation from the norm—and it didn't last. So long as the chief task of the British ruling class was to conquer and administer an Empire the public schools admirably fulfilled their function. But, says Mr. Worsley, that function is not relevant to democracy. He formulates the charge as follows:

The failure has been a failure to adapt—and the failure has been complete. They have remained authoritarian in a growingly democratic age; and they have remained outposts of a landed-gentry outlook when their world has become industrialized. They have inculcated an outmoded social snobbery and an antiquated intellectual outlook—if the word intellectual can be used at all in their context—and a conservative fear of change—and they have continued to inculcate these things throughout a period when history was moving faster than at any other time.

The criticism is fair enough, and Mr. Worsley's commentary on the pattern of the system and the books—like Vachell's *The Hill* reflecting it—is all first-class; only one wishes he would not delight so much in the specious analogy with the Nazi doctrine of the *Führerprinzip*, which really belongs to another world. What he does not seem to understand is that democracy, in the sense that he means it, is still a stranger in our midst; we use the word loosely when we mean certain hard-won liberties or a particular system of representation, but in the idea or technique of democratic control the nation as a whole is in its infancy. Nevertheless, against all the rules, *pace* Mr. Worsley, there is in this country a greater social cohesion than anywhere else.

The plan for bringing the public schools into a well-knit national system of education involves first of all a lowering of the entrance age and compulsory inspection of all private schools—the Preparatory schools, which should be reformed out of existence; then their metamorphosis into national "Junior Universities"—town centres and Village Colleges, as the apex of a pyramid rising from nursery schools through Junior and Senior schools (corresponding to our present elementary and secondary), the main value of which would be to maintain contact, until the leaving age of 18, between manual and intellectual work. Thus "the foundations of a common popular culture would be laid. Its emphasis would be on knowledge as a constructive tool". And the best possible use would be found for the handsome buildings and splendid equipment of what the Frenchman described as "Eton and your other famous public-houses". One almost hopes that economic straits will compel this transformation.

W. HORSFALL CARTER.

HISTORY OF THE ARABS, by Philip K. Hitti. Revised. *Macmillan*. 31s. 6d.

The past of the Arabs is as obscure as their way of living is romantic. If modern methods of transport have made contact with their lands easier, their country is still remote, the names are still hard to pronounce and the people themselves are still behind in the race for the appurtenances of modern civilization. Yet we know that in the middle ages they were the leaders of culture, the men who kept alight the torch of learning in a backward and bigoted world. We still pay homage

to their enterprise and awakened mind by the use of technical terms in many spheres. It is to the Arabs that we owe the *syrrup*, the *ream* of paper, the *alembic* and the *logarithm*. This is a cultural debt which the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have sought to pay by studying Arabic literature and Arabic history and introducing into this study the methods which western scholarship has elaborated.

The task is no easy one. The Arabic language is inherently difficult. Though its former morphological structure has scarcely changed in the last thirteen centuries the use of words reflects the developments of a living language and the resultant vocabulary is enormous. It is as though the student of English history had first to acquire a facility in reading anything from Beowulf to the leader in *The Times*. Next, the source material of Arab history is difficult of access. It is to be found primarily in the great manuscript collections in Europe, America and the Near East. Thus, to consult the complete work of one historian it may be necessary to start in Oxford and end up in India by way of Russia and New York. It was early in the nineteenth century with the introduction on a wide scale of printing in the Near East, that editions of the basic histories began to be produced, but the eastern editions were not critical. European scholars did produce critical editions of the major source works which, though monuments to their industry and models of scholarship, have but touched on the fringe of what is potentially available. In recent years, with the acceptance by the eastern scholars of western principles, a number of important historical works

have been edited in the East with all the critical and comparative apparatus the specialist needs.

The study of Arabic history, as compared with its European counterpart, is therefore in its early stages. Great credit is due to the European scholars of the nineteenth century who were confronted with a mass of anecdotes and accounts of unrelated events, and had to analyse and then construct a picture of Arab history. Thanks to their efforts the main currents of events have been clarified and the specialist in the twentieth century has been able to devote his time to one aspect or one movement. The layman has, however, been almost forgotten. The works of Muir and Lane-Poole excellent when they were produced, no longer represent the latest in research. Professor Hitti's book is therefore most welcome. It sets out to give an account of the history of the Arabs using the results of historical research and the material now available to the scholar. First the Pre-Islamic age is described, then comes the rise of Islam and the state under the caliphs both Umazzad and Abbasid. The Arab domination in Spain and Sicily is recounted and the history of Egypt under the Arabs is given up to the end of Mamluk rule. Professor Hitti gives chapter and verse for most of his statements thus enabling the student to refer to the original Arabic text. He has, moreover, incorporated a wealth of interesting and pertinent photographs and included an excellent series of maps. In this, the second edition, a number of modifications suggested by reviewers have been introduced.

The field is so vast and the task of critical analysis so taxing that it is easy

to criticize the work. One might have hoped for less events and facts and more background and undercurrents of political feeling, but this was not the aim Professor Hitti had in mind. His object seems to have been the presentation in a concise and attractive form of the fruits of modern research. It is clear that for the most part he has consulted the first chroniclers in the original Arabic for himself. As a result, the account has considerable freshness in presentation and a great deal of new material.

The war, whether we wish or no, has revealed the futility of boundaries. It has shown that the well-being of all men is everyman's concern. And since it is ignorance which enhances folly, Professor Hitti's book which expounds the nature of the Arab historical background is a valuable contribution to understanding the Near East. Both scholar and layman can profit from the fruits of academic research which only too often remain the prerogative of the few.

N. S. DONIACH.

THE RED ARMY, by Erich Wollenberg.
Secker & Warburg. 10s. 6d.

THE THREE WEEKS WAR IN POLAND, by Clare Hollingworth.
Duckworth. 6s.

Mr. Wollenberg begins with an account of the original organization of the Red Army in 1918 by Trotsky—a great feat of improvisation in which use was made of the most incompatible material including bold introduction of a high percentage of officers of the Tsarist army. This and the records of the Civil, intervention and Polish wars which follow are of historical interest but at the present what we

want to know is the state of the Russian army to-day—more especially what has been the effect on it of the purge. Writing at the beginning of the Finnish Campaign when the defects of the Army were apparent Mr. Wollenberg does not add much to what is known about them. His most interesting point is that Russian munition factories working under constant pressure at 100 per cent. capacity have no reserve of production power to meet the requirements of war. He is not, of course, in a position to give an explanation of the remarkable increase in efficiency noted by neutral observers in the later stages of the war—administrative capacity which enabled the prolonged attacks in the Karelian Isthmus to be carried through without a break; the remarkable results achieved by the Murmansk railway, and in particular the tactical competence and initiative displayed by officers of all ranks in the final battles all indicate that judgment of the military value of the army needed revision. Has, in fact, the war produced officers at least equal and possibly superior to those liquidated by the purge and are the notorious defects of the army in process of elimination? That Mr. Wollenberg cannot tell us.

The most interesting chapters of his book, therefore, are those that deal with Russo-German relations and the use Stalin would make of his army to further his expansionist ambitions. There would seem to be little probability that Stalin proposes to risk his army in adventurous campaigns but rather intends to use it as an instrument to extort blackmail either from the weak or as a price for non-intervention in the wars of other nations. Always to be prepared to place himself on the side of

the victors is the essence of his strategy. It is hard to believe, however, that victorious nations would lend themselves to the furtherance of Stalin's ambitions to the extent that Mr. Wollenberg assumes they would.

Miss Hollingworth's account of her experiences in Poland is vivid and interesting. A shrewd observer she adds considerably to our knowledge of the initial causes of the Polish disaster. She describes amazing over-confidence and complete lack of appreciation of the extent of the danger, and more than confirms the immense part played by fifth columnists in German plans. It is generally believed that the original surprise bombings of Polish aerodromes was the reason why the Germans at once established complete air-supremacy but Miss Hollingworth does not agree. She attributes it mainly to Polish lack of petrol and to the mal-distribution of such reserves as existed. Many of her comments on the ineffectiveness of the Allies' guarantee make painful reading. For although Poland could not have been saved it is difficult to understand why financial assistance was so long denied her, why anti-aircraft guns were purchased from her when she stood in such need of them herself, or why when Warsaw was being destroyed it was considered a suitable moment to drop leaflets on Berlin.

The Russian invasion of course put an end to Poland's last hope of resistance but the conduct of Russian troops appears to have been disciplined and good. Certainly it would seem that Stalin timed his invasion with great accuracy to ensure a minimum use of force. To that extent he may have

saved many Polish as well as Russian lives. This is certainly a war book that deserves reading.

MAJ.-GEN. SIR CHARLES GWYNN

MOMENT IN PEKING, a Chinese Novel,
by Lin Yutang. *Heinemann.* 15s.

There is one obvious reason why the publication of Lin Yutang's attempt at an epic of modern China is of great importance to-day: after three years of fire and bloodshed the Sino-Japanese war is still unresolved and China claims our interest in a way in which only a human narrative could satisfy it. Lin Yutang is conscious of this, but he seems also to have been aware of two other things, his rôle as an interpreter of China, and the 'Chinese novel'.

His position as an interpreter, though solid and accepted since the appearance of his book *My Country and My People*, is, like the position of all Eastern intellectuals, voluntarily or forcibly exiled in the west, somewhat invidious. The Easterner, if he is to be accepted even as an interpreter of his own country, must write so as to approximate to certain prejudices of the Westerner about the East. The exotic-romantic approach is preferred, or the 'look how queer' angle of the press, or the inevitable Dr. Fu Manchu view of Hollywood and Denham. *My Country and My People* suffered from a certain air of courtly refinement by which Lin Yutang sought to steer clear of European vulgarity, for he ended up by becoming a highbrow aesthete who idealized the importance of living in a kind of ivory tower more chastely than any of his European contemporaries. But, in essaying a 'Chinese novel' from the

time of the Boxer rebellion to the present time, Lin Yutang had to deal with the whole social ferment of modern China through at least two wars and a major revolution, and this book has saved him from himself.

For the 'Chinese novel' has been essentially concrete. It was always, through the centuries of Chinese history, made up of folk stories and epics handed down from mouth to mouth among the people in the vernacular, ignored or contaminated by the scholars, outside the pale, and never regarded as literature, which was made up of certain classics, codes and grammars, edited, annotated and reannotated.

After the 1911 revolution, and with the formation of the Republic, when the classical language of China, *Wen li* gave place to the *Pai Hua* vernacular, a number of writers sprang up under the leadership of Lu Hsun, who emphasized the revival and the creation of social documents in the style of the popular story and epic. But the internecine wars between the several wings of the leadership after the death of Sun Yat Sen, the aggrandizement of foreign powers and the decay of feudalism under the impact of modern Europe and America, only allowed these writers enough time to write random thoughts, reflections on intense moments. Some of these are the most significant contributions to the short story in world literature. The failure of modern Chinese society to stabilize and the lack of a steady period of internal peace and freedom explains the non-appearance of a long narrative in China, though a few collective novels have been planned by the younger Chinese writers and are

doubtless maturing in the interior. And it was left to Lin Yutang to write the 'Chinese novel' in English, in the luxury of America.

Influenced in its design by the three great popular epics, *Shui Hu Chuan* (translated as *All Men are Brothers* by Pearl Buck), *San Kuo* and *Hung Lou Meng*, *Moment in Peking* is the story of an upper middle class family in dissolution, written in English almost as if it were a translation from the original Chinese. The book certainly presents an authentic panorama of a protracted moment, an age of conflicts, and is superior by far to ten books written from the outside. Besides, it is the work of a humane writer whose wide culture has not blunted his sensitiveness.

But, essentially, it only succeeds as an ambitious failure. For Lin Yutang, least affected by the enormities that have been heaped on the contemporary writers of China, refuses to take sides in the issues which are represented in the book, whether it be the Boxer rising, the revolt of youth against age, murder, rape or invasion. In this regard he is not only unlike his predecessors who wrote the folk stories and the epics in China, but he also differs from the majority of his Chinese contemporaries who have been through the baptism of fire, prison, torture and war. And one suspects that he has resurrected from the individualism of his approach as a literary critic a theory of detachment which robs his novel of intensity when what it required, besides super-abundant energy, was the white heat of social passion.

MULK RAJ ANAND.

THE BATTLE OF FRANCE, by André Maurois. *The Bodley Head*. 7s. 6d.

These pen pictures, depicting the changing scene from the beginning of the war until the fall of Paris, would be unreadable had they been attempted by any other author. But as it is they are the contemporary drawings of a master and may be treasured and enjoyed for ever. All M. Maurois's great skill as a writer is to be found in these pages. Here and there he will add a footnote telling his reader sorrowfully that we thought like that once, but, for the rest, he allows each essay to stand just as it was written a year or less ago.

For the most part they are pictures of the B.E.F. in France. They tell of M. Maurois's admiration for the British soldier, of the British soldier's confidence in the French army and even of the British Officer's commandments to his men, ending with the tenth commandment which says "the alliance of France and England has been a political and military necessity: it must become a human reality".

M. Maurois sums up thus:

Like every other nation, she (England) has her faults. The most serious, and the one which has had a hand in our own defeat, is her optimism. Because she has been a happy country, a too happy country, she tends to underestimate danger. Without being prepared she declared war in its most gigantic form against the strongest power in Europe and for a long while nourished the illusion of being able to conquer without departing from her easy and pleasant mode of life in any substantial way. And to this failing must be added the sentimental caprice which makes the country act on impulse and force the hand of its government. It manifested itself on the sanctions question and again at the beginning of the war.

I quote the passage for its obvious interest. I do not believe it to be true. Nor do I believe that M. Maurois' cry "Too few troops", like Marshal Petain's, "Too few babies", was anything more than a small contributory cause of the defeat of France.

ENLIST INDIA FOR FREEDOM, by Edward Thompson. *Gollancz*. 2s. 6d.

Mr. Thompson's views on India are well known. There is, in essence, nothing new in this volume, but it is a wholly admirable exposition of Mr. Thompson's creed and it should gain for his view many new adherents. It is difficult to simplify India's manifold problems, but Mr. Thompson succeeds and the broad principles which he lays down point clearly to the goal of Dominion status.

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